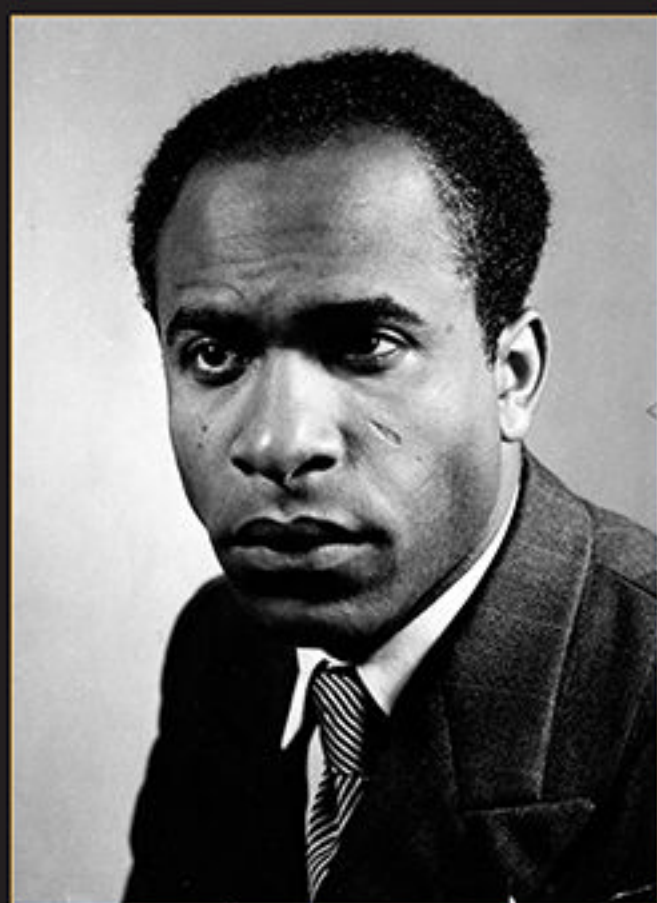


REILAND RABAKA

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# FORMS OF FANONISM



FRANTZ FANON'S CRITICAL THEORY AND  
THE DIALECTICS OF DECOLONIZATION

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# **Forms of Fanonism**



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## Frantz Fanon's Critical Theory and the Dialectics of Decolonization

Reiland Rabaka



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For *Frantz Fanon* in commemoration of his eighty-fifth birthday  
For *Amilcar Cabral* in commemoration of his eighty-fifth birthday  
For *Malcolm X* in commemoration of his eighty-fifth birthday  
For *James Baldwin* in commemoration of his eighty-fifth birthday  
For my grandmother, *Lizzie Mae Davis*, in commemoration  
of her eightieth birthday  
For my grandmother, *Elva Rita Warren*, in celebration of  
her eightieth birthday  
For my great aunt, *Arccressia Charlene Connor*, in celebration of  
her eightieth birthday  
and, lastly and most lovingly,  
For my mother, *Marilyn Jean Giles*, in celebration of  
her sixtieth birthday

*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika . . .*





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# Preface and Acknowledgments

## On the (Re)Formation of Fanonism

I don't mind criticism. I can handle it, but most people can't.

—Fela Kuti

Everything I did wrongly is an experience. . . . To be honest and truthful in all endeavors is an experience, not a regret. . . . To be spiritual is not about praying and going to church. Spiritualism is seeking an understanding of the universe, so that it can be a better place to live in.

—Fela Kuti

[M]an is here against his will. Where do we come from? What was before us? . . . When you think about dying or meditate on death you die, but you're not dead! It is merely a transition. . . . I just want to do my part and leave. . . . You are concerned with what others will remember you for. My position is not so much about what they're going to remember me for, but about what I believe in and what I stand for as a man; I mean to say, as a human being.

—Fela Kuti

Now there's the black cross, the green cross, the white cross, the double-cross, the criss-cross, and the lost cross. And the cross gets awful heavy at different times, but one is supposed to keep on going on and carrying the cross on his shoulder, because you ain't supposed to let no cross cross

you up. You're supposed to let a cross help you get across. And if you let a cross help you get across, you won't get crossed up but you'll be on the cross because you done got across on the cross. So if you can remember this, you won't get lost on the cross while you're trying to get across. So we're just here to let you know about it. I know that you knew already, because y'all the hippest people in the world, hip black and white folk. But, you still know that you got a cross you must deal with. So when it crosses you up, go on and deal with it, and leave it alone.

—Rahsaan Roland Kirk

Now we would like to think of some very beautiful Bright Moments. You know what I mean? Bright Moments! Bright Moments is like eating your last pork chop in London, England, because you ain't gonna get no more . . . cooked from home. Bright Moments is like being with your favorite love and you're sharing the same ice cream dish, and you get mad when she gets the last drop—and then you have to take her in your arms and get it the other way! Oh, Bright Moments! You see, that's too heavy for most of you all because you all don't know nothing about that kind of love. The love you all have been taught about is the love in those magazines, and I am fortunate that I didn't have to look at magazines. Bright Moments! Bright Moments is like seeing something that you ain't ever seen in your life and you don't have to see it but you know how it looks. Bright Moments is like hearing some music that ain't nobody else heard, and if they heard it they wouldn't even recognize that they heard it because they've been hearing it all their life but they nussed on it, so when you hear it and you start popping your feet and jumping up and down they get mad because you're enjoying yourself, but those are Bright Moments that they can't share with you because they don't even know how to go about listening to what you're listening to and when you try to tell them about it they don't know a damn thing about what you're talking about! Are there any other Bright Moments before we proceed? . . . Bright Moments is like having brothers and sisters, and sisterettes and brotherettes like you all here listening to us.

—Rahsaan Roland Kirk

## ROFOROFO FIGHT/NO AGREEMENT/SHUFFERING AND SHMILING: FANON, DU BOIS, AND THE ARDUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICANA TRADITION OF CRITICAL THEORY

*Forms of Fanonism: Frantz Fanon's Critical Theory and the Dialectics of Decolonization* represents something of a departure for me and my lifework. Most of my publications up to this point have essentially revolved around critically engaging W. E. B. Du Bois and establishing the Africana tradition of critical

theory. It, indeed, has been a rough and rocky road, but lately it seems as though a coterie of intellectual-activists interested in critical consciousness-raising have begun to seriously interrogate and, more importantly to me, put Africana critical theory into insurgent intellectual *and* radical political praxis. Since I introduced my conception of critical theory—that is, Africana critical theory—by way of an extended discursive dialogue with Du Bois, there has been a great deal of discussion concerning my intellectual affinity with his lifework and legacy. However, my most recent book, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition, from W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral* (2009), was intended as a symbolic salvo audaciously announcing that my conception of critical theory cannot and should not be quarantined to Du Bois's insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy.

As I conceive it, Africana critical theory is a school of radical/revolutionary thought or a radical/revolutionary thought-tradition primarily preoccupied with radical/revolutionary praxis, which decidedly goes above and beyond the influence of a single intellectual-activist ancestor. The main point of my previous books on Du Bois, therefore, was to (re)introduce and (re)establish the Africana tradition of critical theory through a series of dialectical and discursive dialogues with an intellectual-activist ancestor who is almost undisputedly considered the doyen of black insurgent intellectualism and a peerless pioneer of revolutionary Pan-Africanism, both *within* and *without* Africana studies and the wider African world. In other words, critically engaging Du Bois offered me the opportunity to simultaneously (re)introduce and (re)establish Africana critical theory and put the "disciplinary decadence" of the purportedly (post)modern and (post)colonial academy on display. *Forms of Fanonism*, faithfully following this line of logic, demonstrates that Frantz Fanon's *sui generis* insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy offers both something similar and also something distinctly different from that of Du Bois's oeuvre.

*Forms of Fanonism* deepens and develops Africana critical theoretical discourse by exploring and, truth be told, adding new discursive depth and dialectical dimensions that Du Bois's thought and texts simply did not adequately treat or omitted altogether. Hence, my longstanding, albeit long overlooked, contention that Africana critical theorists are long overdue in bringing Du Bois and Fanon's work into critical dialogue in the interest of, not simply *deconstructing* and *reconstructing* radical politics and critical social theory but, even more, in the interest of offering viable solutions to the most pressing problems of our present age—which is to say, as I unapologetically put it in my first book, "the problems of the twenty-first century." Just as many Marxists or Leninists or, even more, Marxist-Leninists argue that Karl Marx and/or Vladimir Lenin's work continues to speak to the conundrums of the twenty-first century; just as many Gramsci or Sartre or Foucault

scholars contend that their respective iconic intellectual's thought and texts remain relevant with regard to the complexities of the human condition; just as many Marcuse or Adorno or Benjamin or Habermas scholars maintain that their particular critical theorist's corpus continues to provide paradigmatic answers to many of the most crucial questions which confront contemporary society, so too do I assert and accent the ongoing seminal significance of Du Bois and Fanon's thought and texts in terms of ending *epistemic apartheid* and instrumentally aiding us in our endeavors to radically transform ourselves and contemporary society.

If one were to read my previous books on Du Bois with a critical eye (and I humbly pray that you will), then one would notice that Fanon was invoked with an intensity and frequency that almost logically leads to questions concerning the intersections of and the interconnections between Du Bois and Fanon's contributions to the Africana tradition of critical theory and, equally important, Africana critical theory's critique of and connections to the wider world of critical theory—which, it should be openly observed, goes well above and well beyond the Frankfurt School's conception(s) of critical theory. From my vantage point, Du Bois and Fanon's thought and texts simultaneously complements and complicates, not only each others' work but, in all intellectual honesty, my conception of critical theory as well. Traditionally their work has been treated as though they were adroitly analyzing distinctly different, as opposed to comparably different, sets of social problems, political paradoxes, and cultural questions. In my work I do not diminish the distinctiveness of their respective contributions to radical politics and critical social theory, as much as *I bring a Fanonian perspective to Du Bois studies*, and *a Du Boisian perspective to Fanon studies*, and all the while I earnestly endeavor to dialectically do this without in any way distorting or deforming the specificities of what makes each of their oeuvres really and truly special, not simply when contrasted with one another, but also when compared with the work of many of the more noted insurgent intellectuals and critical theorists. This, then, is a text of critical and creative tensions; a text of purposeful paradoxes and planned peculiarities; a text that ultimately represents my earnest efforts to transgress and transcend the provincialisms and propensity to pontificate which I detect developing in Africana studies *and* Fanon studies (*and* Du Bois studies) in specific, and the academy of the twenty-first century in general.

Fanon's thought has always figured prominently in my lifework. I can recall reading, much to my adolescent amazement, his *Black Skin, White Masks* during my turbulent junior year of high school. Then and there, a seed was planted. I can also vividly recollect reading *The Wretched of the Earth* for the first time during the long, hot, and laborious summer before my senior year of high school, and it was one of the books, along with Du Bois's *Darkwater* and James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*, which I credit

with helping me to hold it together through my family's eventual eviction and my first bout of being homeless. In the preface to my first book I reminiscently revealed how I obsessively read and reread Du Bois (e.g., *The Souls of Black Folk*, *The Negro*, *The Gift of Black Folk*, *Black Folk*, *Then and Now*, *Color and Democracy*, *The World and Africa*, and *The Education of Black People*) during this most difficult period of my life. However, what I have not previously shared is Fanon's special place in and singular contributions to my transition from adolescence to adulthood or, rather, from boyhood to manhood. It would be extremely difficult to describe the impact Fanon's words had on me, especially considering my own strained relationship with my African American and Caribbean ancestry at that time.

Homelessness has a way of making one doubt oneself, and everyone and everything encountered. The world that a homeless person sees and experiences is one which is almost inherently filled with doom and gloom, with absurdity and agony. What is more, the world that a homeless teenager sees and experiences, no matter how many times he has been told that he is "talented" and "gifted," is one that—although I have an intimate and excruciating understanding of this world—I would dare not comment on further here, suffice to say that hopefully my readers have a, however enigmatic and understated, understanding of my affinity with both Du Bois *and* Fanon—and literature in general; after all, it was my little library card (which has been lovingly framed and currently sits on my desk) and the countless hours I spent in the library that enabled me to complete high school and get into college on scholarships and loads and loads of student loans.

Where many, if not most, of Du Bois's childhood and collegiate lived-experiences seemed far removed (in a temporal sense) from my own (see his *Dusk of Dawn*, *In Battle for Peace*, and *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*), Fanon's more explicitly existential-phenomenological and anguished autobiographical excursions appealed to my burgeoning "blackness" and, later, increasingly evolving insurgent "Africanity." The angst I experienced during my high school and undergraduate years seemed to have been similarly endured by Fanon, and this, to put it plainly and holding all hyperbole, endeared him to me in an unfathomable way. I intellectually adored and admired him because he, too, knew that he was so much more than "the black," at best, or a "nigger," at worst; he, too, consciously sought to complicate blackness and problematize *the niggerification of black folk* in both the black and white sociocultural imagination; he, too, felt at once a part of and an exile from the peculiar history, culture, and struggle of the African diaspora, even though his personal pedigree (similar to my own) spoke volumes about the often crude and/or criminal processes of creolization and hybridity within the world of the African diaspora; he, too, took an early interest in radical politics and social movements; and lastly, he, too, had a passion for music, theater, and literature.

During this formative phase of my intellectual and political development, I suppose it is safe to say that my inchoate thought was situated somewhere between Du Bois and Fanon but, again I must stress, Fanon has been with me from the beginning of my insurgent intellectual-activist adventures. Where Du Bois gave me guidance with regard to my African American identity and my then acute "double-consciousness," Fanon offered insights into the dilemmas of the Caribbean diaspora and the ways in which Caribbean history and culture are often ignored, excluded, and/or erased, not only within the world(s) of antiblack racism and Eurocentrism, but also, and quite ironically, within the world(s) of black nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Afrocentrism. Indeed, as will be seen in the subsequent "forms" of Fanonism, Fanon was simultaneously critical of the white bourgeoisie and Eurocentric imperial powers *and* the African bourgeois bureaucrats and neocolonial compradors who did their (the white bourgeoisie and Eurocentric imperial powers') debased and diabolical bidding. It was the sincerity and intensity of his dialectical critique of both whiteness *and* blackness that intellectually attracted me to Fanon, then and now. A similar dialectical critique is present in Du Bois's thought and texts, indeed, but Fanon's work offered an Africana existential-phenomenological dimension to my conception of critical theory that enabled me to simultaneously acknowledge and accent its *epistemic strengths* and *theoretical weaknesses*. This is extremely important insofar as authentic critical theory is always and ever an incessant critique and synthesis of the most emancipatory elements of ideas and actions or, rather, theories and praxes allegedly or actually in the interest of human liberation and progressive social transformation.

In Fanon's work I found a serious critique of racism, sexism, capitalism, and colonialism; just as I had discovered something similar within Du Bois's work. However, Fanon's thought helped me to concretize a *revolutionary humanism* that seemed to me embryonic or only hinted at in Du Bois's work. It is toward this revolutionary humanism that *Forms of Fanonism* is always and everywhere striving, even in the midst of seemingly contradictory and extremely difficult discussions, such as those revolving around racism, sexism, and humanism in the "forms" (as opposed to the "chapters") to follow. As a matter of fact, I am currently at work on a book on Amílcar Cabral tentatively titled, *The Weapon of Theory: Amílcar Cabral and the Africana Tradition of Critical Theory*, which will further deepen and develop the revolutionary humanist dimensions of Africana critical theory and demonstrate the continuities and discontinuities between Fanon and Cabral's theories and praxes. *The Weapon of Theory* will speak to the issues revolving around the fact that all too often black scholars and students go to great lengths to make connections between black and white theorists without, first, seriously considering the ways in which Africana theorists in-



fluence each other. Second, all too often when black intellectuals are placed into dialogue with white theorists, it is usually an exercise in demonstrating how the black intellectual's thought is derivative of, or subordinate in some way to the white theorist's work. Rarely is this prickly practice reversed and, even more, rarely do scholars and students raise concerns about intellectual integrity and intellectual equality, which would mean that instead of taking an *either/or* approach to the connections between black and white intellectual activity—such as, *either* the white theorist is the black theorist's superior, *or* the black theorist's work is so "different" from (read: inferior to) the white theorist's work that the black theorist's work is rendered intellectually invisible—we need to take a *both/and* approach, which would mean acknowledging that it is possible for white theorists to be influenced by nonwhite theorists, just as it is possible for nonwhite theorists to be influenced by white theorists. For example, and as I argue in the first "form" of Fanonism, "Antiracist Fanonism," it is highly probable that Jean-Paul Sartre *both* influenced Fanon *and* was in turn influenced by Fanon. Is this so hard to conceive, let alone concede? Sad to say, it seems so, and not merely in the minds of white scholars. Many, in fact, very many black scholars, truth be told, have internalized the insidious accoutrements of Eurocentrism and antiblack racism. Finally, similar to the Harlem Renaissance's influence on Negritude, or Aime Cesaire's influence on Fanon, Fanon's influence on and intellectual interconnections with Cabral offer an almost undeniable example of the ways in which the Africana tradition of critical theory, indeed, represents a "tradition" of critical theory, with all of the continuities and discontinuities, *epistemic strengths*, and *theoretical weaknesses* of any other intellectual tradition or school of thought. *The Weapon of Theory*, therefore, will take the work I began in *Africana Critical Theory* even further than *Forms of Fanonism* by intensely emphasizing Cabral's seemingly contradictory, but all the while decidedly dialectical, efforts to simultaneously contribute to, and transcend, not merely Marxist-Leninism, but—and I am wont to say, *even more*—Fanonism in the interest of creating critical theories and producing radical political praxes to speak to the special needs of the people of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau and their national liberation struggle.

It almost seems silly to say that *Forms of Fanonism* is special to me, as all of my work holds a special place in my heart. Perhaps instead I should say that *Forms of Fanonism* is extraordinarily special to me because it represents my, however imperfect and incomplete, process(es) of critical theoretical self-clarification and, hopefully, intellectual maturation. In *Forms of Fanonism* I have decidedly transgressed and transcended a great deal of my interdisciplinary graduate training, stringently strengthening my *epistemic weaknesses* and critically accenting the *theoretical myopia* that continues to plague the academy of the twenty-first century in general, and Africana studies in

particular. Here I have purposely produced a text that I believe speaks in a special way to my ever-evolving conception of Africana studies as a *trans-disciplinary human science*. As will be witnessed in the introduction, my new or, at the least, my more explicit emphasis on *the revolutionary humanist dimensions of Africana critical theory* and *Africana studies as a transdisciplinary human science* has logically led me to a deep (or, rather, deeper) discursive dialogue with the lifework and legacies of many of the more noted theorists and philosophers of the human sciences—for example, Wilhelm Dilthey, Alfred Schutz, Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Calvin Schrag, Charles Taylor, Valentin Mudimbe and, of course, my colleague Lewis Gordon at Temple University.

Without in any way wanting to suggest that I have exhausted the critical theoretical (re)interpretation of Du Bois's thought and texts, which seems to me at this point virtually impossible, I should share with my readers that *Africana Critical Theory* and *Forms of Fanonism* provided me with opportunities to push and pull my conception of critical theory in much-needed new discursive directions. Truth be told, critically (re)interpreting Du Bois's oeuvre has been at times, quite simply, overwhelming. Also, and much to my dismay, I came to realize that many well-meaning scholars and students had begun to collapse Africana critical theory into Du Bois studies, without realizing that Du Bois's thought and texts were merely one of many paradigms and points of departure for the Africana tradition of critical theory as I conceive it. It is too soon to say whether or not *Africana Critical Theory* laid this misinterpretation of my conception of critical theory to rest, but if there are any lingering doubts that Africana critical theory can and/or, indeed, *does* have a life outside of Du Bois's enormous intellectual orbit, then *Forms of Fanonism* and my forthcoming book *The Weapon of Theory*, I would like to audaciously assert, should be taken as the discursive deathblows to that misinterpretation.

My primary preoccupation, in *Forms of Fanonism* and elsewhere, is with discursively developing an Africana tradition of critical theory and, to speak calmly and candidly here, I maintain an allegiance to an intellectual-activist's theory and praxis on this basis, and this basis alone. Therefore, I am not "breaking" (and certainly not in any definitive sense) with Du Bois studies inasmuch as I am merely discursively *developing* and *doing* Africana critical theory as I conceive it. It is humbly hoped that *Africana Critical Theory* demonstrated that my conception of critical theory draws from the work of a wide range of intellectual-activists: some classical, some contemporary; some male, some female; some from continental Africa, some from the African diaspora; and, some European, while others non-European. In fact, above all else, I pray that with the publication of *Africana Critical Theory*, *Forms of Fanonism*, and *The Weapon of Theory* other scholars and students in-

terested in black radical politics and Africana critical theory will make their own unique contributions to the Africana tradition of critical theory by engaging the lifework and legacies of intellectual-activist ancestors, elders, and contemporary innovators who they sincerely believe have made, or are making seminal and significant contributions to the discourse and development of the Africana tradition of critical theory. In other words, I am saying as solemnly as I possibly can that the Africana tradition of critical theory is characterized by its incessant *epistemic openness* and its stern stance against *epistemic apartheid*. In my texts it is quite common for Fanon to be brought into critical dialogue with Foucault; Du Bois with Dilthey or Derrida; Césaire or Senghor with Sartre; C. L. R. James with Antonio Gramsci or Georg Lukacs; Amílcar Cabral with Herbert Marcuse or Jürgen Habermas; Audre Lorde with Julia Kristeva; Lucius Outlaw with Louis Althusser; Angela Davis with Judith Butler; Cornel West with Cornelius Castoriadis; Joy James with Hannah Arendt; Lewis Gordon with Emmanuel Levinas; or Tsenay Serequeberhan with Hans-Georg Gadamer—indeed, employing *epistemic openness*, the possibilities are literally limitless!

What I am currently calling *epistemic apartheid*, which will be explained in greater detail in the introduction, is an intellectual offshoot of what Lewis Gordon has dubbed “disciplinary decadence.” With *epistemic apartheid*, however, I am attempting to take Gordon’s concept of “disciplinary decadence” one step further by emphasizing that when one reads his book *Disciplinary Decadence* (2006) closely and carefully it is possible to “slightly stretch”—to borrow a phrase from Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*—his concept to encompass or capture not only “the process of critical decay within a field or discipline” but, even more, *the processes of institutional or academic racial colonization and quarantining of knowledge, anti-imperial thought, and/or radical political praxis produced and presented by nonwhite—and I am tempted to say, “especially black”—intellectual-activists*. It would seem to me that this is a major source for much of the “disciplinary decadence” that has long intellectually asphyxiated the academy, although my conscience compels me to also acknowledge that *epistemic apartheid* is not simply about racial colonization. It includes and seeks to raise critical consciousness about the ways in which knowledge is also quarantined along *racially gendered*, religious, sexual orientation, and economic class lines, which ultimately and truculently translates into the dim disciplinary borders and boundaries that Gordon contends causes “disciplinary decadence.” In other words, my concept of *epistemic apartheid* seeks to respectfully build on and go beyond Gordon’s concept of “disciplinary decadence” by doing away with some of its abstractness and denseness, and by concretely applying it to a specific “field or discipline” (i.e., Africana studies) and a specific intellectual or theorist (i.e., Frantz Fanon).

## WHY BLACK MAN DEY SUFFER?/SORROW, TEARS, AND BLOOD: FANON, FELA, AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AESTHETICS OF MY BURGEONING BLACK RADICAL POLITICS

Acknowledging that knowledge has been and remains segregated along race, gender, class, sexuality, and religious lines can be both inspiring and depressing. During my many moments of *theoretical melancholia* I found myself more and more turning to Fanon, reading and rereading his work and the critical commentary on it. Similar to Du Bois, there is a sometimes subtle, and sometimes not so subtle dogged spirit of determination that seems to inform Fanon's each and every word. His words, I was soon to discover, had the power to, literally, resuscitate my life, even as many of them ironically documented his untimely death and, ultimately, granted him intellectual immortality. There simply is no easy way for me to share this, so here goes: In early 2008, just after completing *Du Bois's Dialectics: Black Radical Politics and the Reconstruction of Critical Social Theory* (2008), I suffered a serious accident that temporarily landed me in a coma. To say the least, it was one of the most harrowing experiences of my blues-blessed life.

*Africana Critical Theory* was completed as I laid, literally, in a hospital bed, surrounded by my books, music, and occasional guests. It was during this period that I rekindled my relationship with Fanon. Perhaps it was because I know that he intimately knew illness, terrible and unspeakable illness. Maybe it was what I had read about him reading and writing in bed during his periods of remission and recuperation that drew me back to him and his lifework. Whatever it was, I can now honestly say that Frantz Fanon saved my life. His words hounded, maybe even haunted me. His words challenged and changed me. His heartfelt words spoke to me in a special way that no one—no, not even W. E. B. Du Bois—spoke to me when I reached the nadir of my agonizing ordeal. It was as though, after all of those years of self-transformational struggle and reforming and refining and refinding myself into the person that I am very humbly in the process of becoming today, it took the absurdity of a freak accident to remind me to keep my promise to myself and, more importantly, Frantz Fanon.

As a homeless high schooler and an extremely underprivileged undergraduate student, I promised Du Bois and Fanon that I would do my very best to earnestly attempt to repay part of the enormous and unfathomable debt I owe to them by sharing the magic and mystery of their teachings with as many people as would hear and heed. I have written elsewhere that I found myself in Du Bois's words. Here and now, unapologetically and unrepentantly, I acknowledge the weight and gravity that Fanon's words and work has had, not only on my conception of radical politics and critical social theory but, even more, on my personal process(es) of decolonization

and liberation; on my efforts to learn to love and bring the dialectic to bear on continental and diasporan Africa; and lastly, on my journey to reclaim and reconstruct my long-denied and long-denuded humanity and faithfully fashion a revolutionary humanism.

I had been postponing the completion of *Forms of Fanonism* for many years by the time of my accident. Initially I had wanted it to follow my first book on Du Bois, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century* (2007), and then, after *Forms of Fanonism*, I intended to publish *Africana Critical Theory*. This was my early idea for what I then, fresh out of graduate school, grandly dubbed: "The Africana Critical Theory Trilogy." However, time and circumstances (I shall make no mention of the spirit for fear of frightening many of my more conservative readers off . . .) led me in other discursive directions. I write all of this without one single sentiment of regret, but only to share with my readers that deeply dialoguing with Du Bois for more than a decade transformed not simply my conceptions of black radical politics and critical social theory but also my rapport with Fanon. All of those years of researching and writing on Du Bois provided me with the theoretical tools and intellectual instruments to research and write *Africana Critical Theory* and *Forms of Fanonism*—and, it was Du Bois's oft-noted "contradictory" and "controversial" ever-evolving thought that I believe ultimately enabled me to develop a deeper, perhaps more dialectical relationship with each of the intellectual-activist ancestors I engaged in *Africana Critical Theory*; Fanon being one of them. *Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century* and *Du Bois's Dialectics*, therefore, represent my efforts to come to terms with the often vexing textual tensions and conceptual contradictions of not simply Du Bois's thought and texts but the Africana tradition of critical theory as a whole.

Prior to my accident I had spent my year-long sabbatical globe-trotting from research archives and university libraries throughout Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe, conducting research and collecting data for *Africana Critical Theory* and *Forms of Fanonism*. I was uncertain as to exactly when I might finish *Forms of Fanonism*, which is to say that by that point it had become my custom to collect and analyze data on Fanon endlessly, jotting down ideas and drafting chapters, but not seriously setting aside the blocks of time necessary to focus and fashion my increasingly critical thoughts on Fanon and Fanon studies into a book. Besides, I still wondered whether I was ready to return to Fanon, and whether I would be able to lucidly illuminate his distinct contributions to the Africana tradition of critical theory in a way that deftly demonstrated both the strengths and weaknesses of his work in general. To be sure, his work presented me with a series of puzzles and pitfalls remarkably different from those Du Bois's work presented. In the midst of my dubious dilemma and intellectual soul-searching the unthinkable happened: a life-threatening accident that suspended my research and

writing regimen, it seemed to me initially, indefinitely or, in the worst-case scenario, permanently. To be perfectly honest, I was devastated and deeply depressed. Just as it seemed that I was finally in the process of achieving my life-long goal of being a writer, a *freedom fighter* and *freedom writer*, as I am fond of saying, death came knocking at my door. Then, somehow and somehow, all of which remains inexplicable to me, Fanon's spirit beckoned to me and awoke me from my stubborn stupor. I vowed, then and there, consciously and unconsciously, and miserably laying in my hospital bed, to turn my tragedy into triumph. I would finish *Forms of Fanonism* if it was, literally, the last thing that I did!

*Forms of Fanonism*, therefore, is no mere intellectual exercise—and I would earnestly argue the same about each and every one of my works. It, indeed, is a book about Frantz Fanon, but it is also, however hidden, a book about a profoundly humbled and miraculously resuscitated Reiland Rabaka. As I lay there, first on the surgeon's table, and then uncomfortably in my hospital bed, I thought long and hard about my life and the kind of legacy I would like to leave. I can still hear faint traces of my family and friends' voices as they insisted again and again that I was too young to be bothered with such thoughts, "such morbid thoughts," my mother and grandmother scolded, but then I thought about Fanon, then Steve Biko, then Che Guevara, then Malcolm X, then Martin Luther King Jr., then Walter Rodney, and finally Bob Marley—each of whom left this laborious life in their thirties. Maybe it was the morphine; maybe it was the angst I was experiencing over my then unfinished book, *Africana Critical Theory*. Whatever it was, it gave me a new lease on life. I channeled Fanon's resilient spirit during the seemingly protracted period when my doctors were skeptical whether or not I would pull through; a fact that I have shamefully hidden from most my family and friends to this day. I read again and again, in as many biographies as I could lay hands on, about how Fanon refused to die until he had completed *The Wretched of the Earth*. I, rather foolishly I have come to think, thought that if Fanon could push his busted and broken body to the brink to finish his book, so too could I. Let me say quite simply and quite sincerely, *I am not Frantz Fanon*. Clearly, he possessed a peculiar passion and determined discipline that I have only obsessively daydreamed about, but that I nonetheless strive to achieve each and every day of my life—and indefatigably intend to continue to strive to achieve until I am called on to humbly go and meet my Maker and jubilantly join my ancestors doing a divine ring shout.

As I am not at all fond of and do not watch or own a television, I was initially bored beyond explanation when I was in the hospital. Then, boxes and boxes of my repeatedly requested books and music began to arrive. This was the turning point. I harked back to, and heeded my grandmother's weighted words when she told me that "in order to survive black folk gon'

have to learn how to sacrifice and make somethin' outta nothin', like the ancestors done did." I, in truth and without blaming my most beloved grandmother, did dare to push my ailing body but, again I say, *I am not Frantz Fanon*. I discovered this the hard way. My battered and badly bruised body retreated just as my spirit reached its most revolutionary moment: I collapsed and, according to my doctors, was on the verging of slipping back into a coma. Then and there my doctors and my family forbade me from working "like a madman" and "at all hours of the day and night," and thereafter I had to again observe the rules and rhythms of "normal human life," as my mother lovingly, albeit unapologetically, put it. As I am not prone to angering my grandmothers or mother, because through all of life's tragedies and triumphs they have unconditionally loved and supported me, I made a conscious decision to pace myself. No matter how "radical" or "revolutionary" I think I am, or actually ever become, they and they alone may check me with impunity.

Eventually, of course, I did finish *Africana Critical Theory*, and now I even look back on my period of recuperation, both in and out of the hospital, as one of the most intellectually exciting episodes of my relatively lackluster life. There was a period when I was reading three to four books a week on average and, though my body would not allow me to achieve Fanon's level of passion and spirit of perseverance, I was ultimately able to take my conception of critical theory in new discursive directions. My new lease on life in general, and these new discursive directions in particular, also prompted me to explore new musical *soundscapes*, especially with regard to African and Caribbean music. It is as if I was searching for a new soundtrack for my new life.

It has become my custom to make mention of the music that inspired me during the research and writing of each of my books. In the preface to *Africana Critical Theory* I shared how the music of Duke Ellington and Sun Ra served as the primary sources of musical inspiration. In *Forms of Fanonism* the songs that seemed to speak to and seep through each and every word were primarily provided by the musical genius of Fela Anikulapo Kuti—although I should observe that the music of Art Tatum, Ornette Coleman, Anthony Braxton, Abdullah Ibrahim, Bheki Mseleku, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Makanda Ken McIntyre, Pharaoh Sanders, Yusef Lateef, Youssou N'Dour, Angélique Kidjo, Thomas Mapfumo, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Salif Keita, Miriam Makeba, Baaba Maal, Césaria Évora, Hugh Masekela, King Sunny Adé, Zap Mama, Franco (Francois Luambo Makiadi), Manu Dibango, Les Nubians, Ismaël Lô, Ephat Mujuru, Tracy Chapman, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Lucky Dube, Peter Tosh, and Bob Marley was ever-present as well. Fela, it seems to me, is a Fanonian musician, if ever there was one! Just go and listen to *Roforofo Fight* (1972), or *Gentleman* (1973), or *Confusion* (1975), or *Zombie* (1977), or *No Agreement* (1977), or *Shuffling and Shmiling* (1978), or

*Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense* (1987), or his immortal *Beasts of No Nation* (1989). Where Cabral spoke of the "weapon of theory," Fela characteristically declared that "music is the weapon!" Like Fanon, Fela was multidimensional, often creating music that was simultaneously accessible and politically provocative. He was a master composer, multi-instrumentalist, Pan-Africanist, human rights activist, sometimes masculinist, sometimes controversially considered a "male-feminist" (see his *Na Poi* [1972], *Open & Close* [1972], *Shakara* [1972], and *Noise for Vender Mouth* [1975]) and, above all else, the creator of what we now know as "Afro-Beat." His music, more than any of the aforementioned (save only, perhaps, Art Tatum, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Abdullah Ibrahim), has provided the soundtrack for the countless hours of travel, research, and writing that went into the book you now hold in your hands. From research archives and university libraries throughout the United States, to research centers and special collections in the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe, Fela's music and radical political aesthetic has faithfully inspired me to dig deeper and develop my own distinct dialectical relationship with Fanon. I owe Fela or, rather, his music an enormous debt. This text then, too, is an offering, not only to my intellectual-activist ancestors but also to my many musical-activist ancestors.

**TEACHER DON'T TEACH ME NONSENSE!: SAYING ASANTE  
SANA TO MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS, TO MY  
COLLEAGUES AND COMRADES**

As mentioned above, *Forms of Fanonism* is not simply an intellectual exercise, but, truth be told, a testament to what my many teachers have generously contributed to my personal, professional, and radical political development. Indeed, many of my "teachers" work within the halls and walls of the academy, but even more of them struggle in the treacherous streets, political organizations, and community centers that have long provided impoverished youth, such as myself, with much-needed opportunities. Frantz Fanon, as I will repeat throughout the text, represents the central insurgent intellectual-activist ancestor who provides me with a paradigm and point of departure in which to explore Africana studies' contributions to the deconstruction and reconstruction of radical politics and critical social theory. Though his thought and texts provide the primary points of departure, the theories and praxes of many, many other academic and "organic" intellectuals have influenced and informed my conceptions of radical politics and critical social theory. Therefore, each "form" of Fanonism analyzed in this book bears the indelible imprint of the diverse—though often disconnected—intellectual and political arenas and agendas I draw from and



endeavor to establish critical dialogue with. As a consequence, the list of academic and “organic” intellectuals, activists, archivists, institutions, and organizations to which I am indebted is, indeed, enormous. Such being the case, I hope I may be forgiven for deciding that the most appropriate way in which to acknowledge my sincere appreciation is simply to list them below without the protracted praise each has so solemnly earned. I must begin by expressing my deepest gratitude and most heartfelt *asante sana* (a thousand thanks) to my family: my mother, Marilyn Giles; my grandmothers, Lizzie Mae Davis (deceased) and Elva Rita Warren; my great aunt, Arcressia Charlene Connor; my older brother and his wife, Robert Smith II and Karen Smith; my younger brother and his wife, Dwight Clewis and Terica Clewis; my nieces and nephews, Journée Clewis, Dominique Clewis, Robert Smith III, Ryan Smith, Kalyn Smith, Remington Smith; my father, Robert Smith I; my grandfathers, Jafari Jakuta Rabaka (deceased) and Joseph Warren (deceased); and, my innumerable aunts, uncles, and cousins throughout continental and diasporan Africa.

An undertaking as ambitious as *Forms of Fanonism* would have been impossible without the assistance of colleagues and comrades, both far and wide. I express my earnest appreciation to the following fine folk, who each in their own special way contributed to the composition and completion of this book: W. E. B. Du Bois; C. L. R. James; Langston Hughes; James Baldwin; Audre Lorde; Sonia Sanchez; Amiri Baraka; Lucius Outlaw; Lewis Gordon; Mireille Fanon Mendès-France; Lamya Al-Kharusi; William King; Rhonda Tankerson; De Reef Jamison; Denise Lovett; Adam Clark; Elzie Billops; Sigmund Washington; Kimberly Marshall; Patrick De Walt; Awon Atuire; Nelson Keith; Stacey Smith; Allison Dill; Toroitch Cherenko; Zachary Epps; Ursula Lindqvist; La’Neice Littleton; Tiya Trent; Sara Bloom; Garrad Lee; Amber Camus; Frank Oliver; Daisy Wiberg; Vincent Harding; Alan Sica; Janette Klingner; Sandra Lane; and, Mpozi Tolbert (deceased). In addition, the faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Ethnic Studies and the Center for Studies of Ethnicity and Race in America (CSERA) at the University of Colorado at Boulder deserve special thanks for their patience and critical support.

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I would like to conclude by expressing my love to, and my most profound reverence for my mother, grandmothers, and great aunt. As mentioned above, they have always been there for me. Although my brothers and I grew up in a most acute abject poverty, it was my mother, grandmothers, and great aunt who constantly reminded us that our poverty did not automatically deny our human dignity. They double-dared us to dream but, even more, they encouraged us to humbly and diligently work toward turning our dreams into our realities. Though they could have discouraged me from pursuing higher education, since no one in our immediate family has ever attended a college or university, they instead encouraged and supported me. Why or how, remains a mystery to me. It is, indeed, inexplicable how these humble human beings—three of whom do not hold high school diplomas—inspired a little “black boy” (reminiscent of Richard Wright) to dream that he could somehow, someday, transform himself, transcend his unforgiving environment and, literally, travel from the projects to the professoriate. I suppose that what my grandmothers, great aunt, and mother bequeathed to me is love in its purest and most unadulterated form. So, once again, to them, I say simply, *nakupenda sana*—I love, admire, and adore you more than any words can express; I love you more than all of the grains of sand on all the seashores; I love you unceasingly and eternally. This book, as with all of my work, is a testament to what my grandmothers, great aunt, and mother taught me and, truth be told, continue to teach me. In other words, *Forms of Fanonism* is my, however mute, tribute to my first and most beloved “teachers” who did not teach me nonsense, to borrow a favorite phrase from Fela.

If, then, my most respected readers, any inspiration or insights are gathered from my journey through the jungles of radical politics and critical social theory, I pray you will attribute them to the aforementioned—my academic and “organic” teachers. However, if (or, I should say, when) you find foibles and intellectual idiosyncrasies, I humbly hope you will neither associate them with any of the forenamed nor, most especially, Frantz Fanon. I, and I alone, am responsible for what herein is written. As is my custom, then, I begin by softly saying, almost silently singing my earnest and eternal prayer: *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrik*. . . .<sup>1</sup>

## NOTE

1. Translation: “God bless Africa” in Xhosa. Azania or South Africa’s national anthem, “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika,” was composed in 1897 by Enoch Mankayi Sontonga, a Xhosa teacher and choirmaster at a Methodist mission school in Johannesburg. Since it was first sung in 1899 at the ordination of Reverend Bowen, a minister in the Methodist tradition, it has been adopted as the anthem of the African National Congress and the national anthem of both Tanzania and Zambia. Additionally, it was sung in Zimbabwe and Namibia during their respective struggles against racial colonialism. Most of Sontonga’s songs were heart-wrenching odes, somewhere between the spirituals and the blues, often grappling with the human suffering and social misery of black life under apartheid. Sontonga, a reportedly deeply religious man, is said to have repeatedly recited this prayer and taught it to his many pupils. The African National Congress continues to close its meetings with this song, and it has been reported that, upon his release from being unjustly imprisoned for twenty-seven years on Robben Island, Madiba Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was so moved by the solemn singing of it that once elected the president of South Africa he declared Sontonga’s grave a national monument and erected a memorial in his honor. Therefore, in my earnest effort to show my sincere solidarity with my known and unknown kith and kin throughout continental and diasporan Africa, I know of no better way to conclude this preface and begin my beloved book: *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika*.



# Introduction

## The Five Forms of Fanonism: Deconstructing and Reconstructing Africana Studies, Radical Politics, and Critical Social Theory in the Anti-imperialist Interests of the Wretched of the Earth

All forms of exploitation resemble one another. They all seek the source of their necessity in some edict of a Biblical nature. All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same "object": man. When one tries to examine the structure of this or that form of exploitation from an abstract point of view, one simply turns one's back on the major, basic problem, which is that of restoring man to his proper place. . . . I cannot disassociate myself from the future that is proposed for my brother. Every one of my acts commits me as a man. Every one of my silences, every one of my cowardices reveals me as a man.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (pp. 88–89)

Let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth. . . . So, comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions, and societies which draw their inspiration from her. Humanity is waiting for something from us other than such an imitation, which would be almost an obscene caricature. If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and America into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (pp. 313, 315)

Fanon's analysis shows that only an interdisciplinary approach embracing psychological, sociological and economic methods of interpretation can do justice to the cluster of problems which is colonialism.

—Renate Zahar, *Frantz Fanon: Colonialism and Alienation—Concerning Frantz Fanon's Political Theory* (p. 58)

*Forms of Fanonism: Frantz Fanon's Critical Theory and the Dialectics of Decolonization* evolved out the fifth chapter of my book *Africana Critical Theory*, which is entitled "Frantz Fanon: Revolutionizing the Wretched of the Earth, Radicalizing the Discourse on Decolonization," where I critically engaged what I understood then to be Fanon's formative contributions to the discourse and ongoing development of the Africana tradition of critical theory. As I was researching and writing that chapter I developed an intense (perhaps I should say, *even more* intense) affinity with Fanon's insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy, one that I have now—that is, in unhurried hindsight—come to conceive as a major turning point in my insurgent intellectual and radical political development. Fanon, it seemed to me then and it remains so now, offers the Africana tradition of critical theory not only radical political paradigms and critical theoretical points of departure, à la C. L. R. James, Aime Césaire, and Leopold Senghor, but above and beyond the aforementioned and more along the lines of W. E. B. Du Bois and Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, in his shamefully short though incredibly remarkable life, contributed a virtual treasure trove of innovative insights, critical theories, and revolutionary praxes that extend far beyond the borders and boundaries of the critique of racism, colonialism, and capitalism, and consciously developed dialectical discourses on sexism and humanism in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth as well.<sup>1</sup>

When Fanon's critiques of racism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and humanism are brought into the ever-widening orbit of *Africana critical theory*, which is to say that when Fanon's discourse on white supremacy, patriarchy, racial colonization, racial violence, racial exploitation, racial oppression, and what it means to really and truly *be* and *become* "human"—though thoroughly racialized and colonized—are analyzed for their contribution to the deepening and ongoing development of the Africana tradition of critical theory, something unprecedented in the annals of Africana intellectual history happens: *five distinct forms of Fanonism emerge*. In *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, Lewis Gordon, Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, and Renee White (1996) outline five distinct *stages* of Fanon studies in their introduction (pp. 1–8). The first stage was represented by "the various applications of and reactions to" Fanon's work by the radicals, liberals, and conservatives of the 1960s and 1970s (p. 5; see, e.g., Arendt, 1970; Cabral, 1972, 1973, 1979; A. Y. Davis, 1998b; Freire, 1993, 1996, 1998; Guevara, 1968, 1969, 1999; Marcuse, 1965a, 1970a, 1972a; Memmi, 1971, 1973; H. P. Newton,



1972, 1973, 2002; Sartre, 1968, 1995). The second stage saw the blossoming of biographical works on Fanon by Pierre Bouvier (1971), Carlos Fernandez-Pardo (1971), David Caute (1970), Pietro Clemente (1971), Peter Geismar (1971), and Irene Gendzier (1973). The third stage centered on the significance of Fanon's thought and texts for social and political theory, with major contributions by Hussein Adam (1974, 1999), Lidija Alekseevna (1979), Emmanuel Hansen (1974, 1977), L. Adele Jinadu (1973, 1986), Phillippe Lucas (1971), Martin Staniland (1968), Lou Turner and John Alan (1986), and Renate Zahar (1974). The fourth stage revolved around the rise of postmodernism and postcolonialism, and many, mostly literary theorists and cultural critics, such as Edward Said (1989, 1993, 1999, 2000), Abdul JanMohamed (1984, 1985, 1988), Henry Louis Gates, Jr., (1999), Homi Bhabha (1990, 1996, 1999), Gayatri Spivak (1990, 1996, 1999), and Benita Parry (1987, 2004), critically analyzed Fanon's thought and texts from post-modern and postcolonial perspectives. The fifth and "final" stage of Fanon studies "consists of engagements with the thought of Fanon for the development of original work across the entire sphere of human studies. Its purpose is neither to glorify nor denigrate Fanon but instead to explore ways in which he is a useful thinker" (Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White, 1996, pp. 6–7). Works which fall within the fifth stage include Hussein Bulhan's *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (1985), Cedric Robinson's "The Appropriation of Frantz Fanon" (1993), Tsenay Serequeberhan's *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy* (1994), Alessandro Aruffo and Giovanni Pirelli's *Frantz Fanon, o, l'eversione anticoloniale* (1994), Lewis Gordon's *Fanon and the Crisis of the European Man* (1995b), Ato Sekyi-Otu's *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (1996), Alan Read's *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation* (1996), Tracy Sharpley-Whiting's *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* (1997), Anthony Alessandrini's *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives* (1999), Nigel Gibson's *Rethinking Fanon* (1999e) and *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (2003), Nabil Cherni's *Visions of the Wretched: Homage to Frantz Fanon* (2004), and Max Silverman's *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (2005), among others.

Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White (1996) relate that a core characteristic of the work that falls within the fifth stage of Fanon studies is that "even in cases where Fanon's name is prominent in the title, the objectives are ultimately the disciplines" of the various theorists undertaking the studies (p. 7). It is, therefore, with this in mind that I openly acknowledge that my work is rooted in and grows out of the fifth stage of Fanon studies. However, it is doubly distinguished from other engagements of Fanon's thought and texts—that is, the works of all five stages of Fanon studies—insofar as it is the first study to consciously examine his contributions to Africana studies and critical theory or, rather, the Africana tradition of critical theory. *Forms of Fanonism* identifies and analyzes Fanon's contribu-

tions to the deconstruction and reconstruction of Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory. In highlighting his unique “solutions” to the “problems” of racism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and humanism, *five distinct forms of Fanonism materialize*, which—to go back to Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White’s words—enable us to “explore ways in which he is a useful thinker” with regard to relieving the wretchedness of the wretched of the earth of the twenty-first century *and* deconstructing and reconstructing Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory in their anti-imperialist interests. Throughout the subsequent “forms” of *Forms of Fanonism*, then, I understand myself to be in critical dialogue with Fanon, asking his corpus critical questions and seeking from it crucial answers, which also means that I have made up my mind to work *with* and *through* Fanon in my ongoing quest(s) to search for viable solutions to the ever-increasing problems of racism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and humanism. This book, in short, keeps with Fanon’s own predilection for connecting critical theory to revolutionary praxis by utilizing his thought and texts as paradigms and points of departure to deepen and develop the Africana tradition of critical theory.

What has long bothered me about the five stages of Fanon studies, and one of the main reasons I duly decided to research and write this book, is because of the longstanding tendency to downplay and diminish Fanon’s contributions to Africana studies, or the dim-witted disposition that seems to always and everywhere sever Fanon from Africana studies or, worst of all, the inclination to render Africana studies utterly invisible or altogether nonexistent. Immediately after admitting all of this, however, I want to make it perfectly clear that I do not in anyway wish to fall into, or continue the prickly practice of what the critically acclaimed Caribbean American philosopher Lewis Gordon (2006c) has correctly called “disciplinary decadence.” In his own words:

*Disciplinary decadence* is the ontologizing or reification of a discipline. In such an attitude, we treat our discipline as though it was never born and has always existed and will never change or, in some cases, die. More than immortal, it is eternal. Yet as something that came into being, it lives, in such an attitude, as a monstrosity, as an instance of a human creation that can never die. Such a perspective brings with it a special fallacy. Its assertion as absolute eventually leads to no room for other disciplinary perspectives, the result of which is the rejection of them for not being one’s own. Thus, if one’s discipline has foreclosed the question of its scope, all that is left for it is a form of “applied” work. Such work militates against thinking. (pp. 4–5, emphasis in original)

What is in question here are the borders and boundaries of disciplinary knowledge and the ways in which many, if not most, academicians have repeatedly and unrepentantly rejected *discipline-transcending* or, rather,

*transdisciplinary knowledge*—that is, knowledge which *transgresses*, *transcends*, and *transverses* disciplines or specific fields of scholarly inquiry. This is, also, I should add, symptomatic of what we could call *epistemic closure*, where one is only open to, or seriously engages knowledge emanating from their respective discipline or field and, in the most closed-minded and claustrophobic manner, xenophobically considers knowledge from “outside” of their discipline or field pure-folly, “foreign” foolishness, as it were. Continuing his discourse on disciplinary decadence, Gordon importantly concludes:

Disciplinary decadence, as we have seen, is the process of critical decay within a field or discipline. In such instances, the proponent ontologizes his or her discipline far beyond its scope. Thus, a decadent scientist criticizes the humanities for not being scientific; a decadent literary scholar criticizes scientists and social scientists for not being literary or textual; a decadent social scientist sins in two directions—by criticizing either the humanities for not being social scientific or social science for not being scientific in accord with, say, physics or biology. And, of course, the decadent historian criticizes all for not being historical; the decadent philosopher criticizes all for not being philosophical. The public dimension of evidence is here subordinated by the discipline or field’s functioning, literally, as the world. Thus, although another discipline or field may offer evidence to the contrary, it could, literally, be ignored simply on the basis of not being the point of view of one’s discipline or field. (p. 33)

When I register my complaint concerning the fact that many, if not most, of the works of the five stages of Fanon studies have consistently either, at best, overlooked Fanon’s contributions to Africana studies or, at worst, rendered his contributions to, *and* Africana studies in and of itself invisible or entirely nonexistent, I am not putting into practice that awful ideology or foul “perspective” that “brings with it a special fallacy” that Gordon remarked about above. Quite the contrary, I am pointing to something altogether different, something a little more illusive or subtle that has seemed to slip through the cracks and crevices of the scholarship on Fanon. This, therefore, is not a simple case of “disciplinary decadence” where I incorrigibly argue that “my discipline is better than yours, you ignoramus!” and where I sanctimoniously believe that my discipline is the end-all and be-all or, rather, the definitive “last word” in terms of human studies.

What I wish to do here is circumvent the very tired tendency to read or, rather, misread Fanon in reductive disciplinary terms where his thought is validated and legitimated only insofar as it can be roguishly reframed and/or forced to fit into the arbitrary and artificial academic confines of this or that decadent discipline. Employing Africana critical theory as its conceptual and methodological framework, *Forms of Fanonism* seeks to consciously avoid a decadent disciplinary approach or, rather, reproach to

Fanon in favor of a more philosophically flexible and epistemically open *human scientific* (re)interpretation of his thought and texts in light of the key crises and conundrums confronting the wretched of the earth, radical politics and critical social theory in the early years of the twenty-first century. From the Africana critical theoretical frame of reference, it is foolhardy and completely fallacious to criticize or condemn a theorist because his or her ideas (and/or actions) do not fit nicely and neatly into the, again, arbitrary and artificial academic categories and confines of one's respective (or, rather, *irrespective*) decadent discipline. Fanon, as will be witnessed throughout this work, was not simply a "psychoanalyst" or philosopher or revolutionary but, even more, he was an extremely innovative and complex intellectual-activist whose intellectual history-making dialectical discourse appropriated the wide range of epistemic resources—whether from the social sciences or the humanities, or the life-worlds and life-struggles of the wretched of the earth—at his disposal, and these epistemic resources became integral parts of his ever-evolving critical theoretical arsenal without any regard whatsoever for the arbitrary and artificial academic and disciplinary borders and boundaries of Europe's insidious ivory towers and the apartheid-like absurdities of the American academy.

It is in this sense, then, that I argue that Fanon can be considered a *trans-disciplinary critical social theorist*. Furthermore, it is also in bearing the foregoing in mind that I remind my readers that when viewed from the epistemically open Africana critical theoretical framework, Fanon's thoughts and actions, however "critical" and "radical," are not found to be faultless, and that he, therefore, is not presented throughout the subsequent studies that constitute this book as the pristine and preeminent critical theorist of the twentieth (or, let it be solemnly said, the twenty-first) century. I honestly believe that what we—that is, Africana and other new critical theorists—need is to critically return to Fanon, as opposed to Eurocentric, bourgeois feminist, postmodern and postcolonial interpretations or, rather, mind-blowing misinterpretations of Fanon's thought and texts.

If racial colonialism continues to be perfectly pathological, sorely sadistic and viscerously violent—as I understand it to be and as I have argued that it is in all of my works—then we need the insurgent intellectual and radical political resources of what remains one of the most profound and provocative critiques and confrontations of not simply racial colonialism, but also of the ways in which racism and colonialism incessantly overlap, interlock, and intersect with capitalism, sexism and, even more ironically, humanism—that which, as will be witnessed, acutely occurs throughout the passionate pages of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, *A Dying Colonialism*, *Toward the African Revolution*, and *The Wretched of the Earth*. It is for these seemingly forgotten reasons that *Forms of Fanonism* not only advocates that authentic Fanonists critically return to Fanon, but

that I sincerely seek to accent the fact that many of Fanon's most famous, if not "infamous," theories are more relevant now than they were during his lifetime. For instance, Fanon's theory of the psychopathological impact of the simultaneous racialization and colonization of the wretched of the earth, his theory of the interconnections and inextricability of colonialism and capitalism, his theory of the dialectic of revolutionary violence and revolutionary decolonization, his theory of the dialectic of women's decolonization and women's liberation, and his theory of revolutionary humanism are undoubtedly more needed now, and especially with regard to the dialectical deconstruction and reconstruction of Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth, than ever before.

Racial colonial patriarchal capitalist pathology is not simply, as Jurgen Habermas and the Habermasian critical theorists would have it, "colonization of our life-worlds by the capitalist system," although capitalism is most certainly an important aspect of such a pathology, but it also includes the overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting systems of violence, exploitation and oppression in the guileful guises of racism, sexism, and colonialism as well.<sup>2</sup> It is here then, too, that the Africana critical theoretical (re)interpretation of Fanon critically returns to Fanon's thought and texts and intensely emphasizes that Africana studies' distinct *transdisciplinary human scientific research methods and modes of analysis* may have or, rather, indeed, does have much to offer the, as of late, forlorn field of Fanon studies.

On a deeper, perhaps, even more logically dangerous level I am saying, first and foremost, that Africana studies is not a discipline but, rather, a *transdisciplinary human science* that rejects the rules of the *epistemic apartheid* of the European and European American ivory towers of academia. Secondly, Africana studies, on principle, deems those academics and/or academic disciplines that do not critically dialogue with or leave "no room for other disciplinary perspectives" or human sciences, the upholders (or, rather, "downpressors," to use Peter Tosh's terse term) of *epistemic apartheid* and extremely intellectually insular academic enterprises which "discipline and punish" (to use Michel Foucault's famous phrase) intellectual insurgency and intellectual innovations in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth.<sup>3</sup> And, finally, utilizing its own distinct critical theoretical framework—that is, Africana critical theory—Africana studies sidesteps and solemnly challenges the lazy line of illogic which ideologically and/or a priori repudiates the intellectual insurgency and intellectual innovations from other disciplines because they are not "one's own" with its unique emphasis on *epistemic openness*, as opposed to *epistemic closure*, which is precisely the issue that Gordon's conception of "disciplinary decadence" identifies, exposes and, if truth be told, ingeniously elegizes above.

Fanon has been half-heartedly hailed as a psychoanalyst, philosopher, sociologist, Marxist, and political activist, but never as a transdisciplinary critical social theorist with concrete radical political commitments to not simply eradicating the wretchedness of the wretched of the earth, revolutionary decolonization, and revolutionary democratic socialism, but to the multicultural masses, transethnic working-classes, women's liberation, and revolutionary humanism. He has long been praised and criticized by legions of scholars who have interpreted and rigorously reinterpreted his work, often overlooking its deep critical theoretical dimensions. In this book, consequently, Fanon's multifarious and ever-evolving critical social theory is situated at the center and examined for the first time for its significance for contemporary Africana studies, radical political thought, and revolutionary social movements.

### EXPATIATING AFRICANA STUDIES: TOWARD A FANONIAN PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN SCIENCE

In order to understand Fanon's contributions to critical theory, and his contributions to the discourse and ongoing development of the Africana tradition of critical theory in specific, one must first engage the discursive formations of Africana studies and Africana intellectual history. Why, we are quick to ask? Well, it could be said in response, because his thought and texts prefigured and continue to contribute to virtually every major area of critical inquiry in Africana studies: from Pan-Africanism to black nationalism; from black Marxism to black feminism; and, from black radical politics to black social psychology, etcetera. Therefore, to get a grasp of Fanon's thought, let alone seriously grapple with the issues it addresses, we have to critically engage the classical thought-traditions that fueled and formed it, as well as the contemporary thought-traditions that it gave rise to and laid a foundation for. More than any other intellectual arena, Africana studies has consistently, even if often contradictorily, given Fanon's thought and texts its highest commendations and its most meticulous and constructive criticisms. It is also the transdisciplinary arena—that is, the conglomerate section or subsections of the human sciences—perhaps, most modeled on his extensive and diverse insurgent intellectual activity and revolutionary praxis because it is, to reiterate, a *transdisciplinary human science* (i.e., a branch of knowledge that is preoccupied with enhancing the quality of human life and/or improving the human condition, which transgresses, transcends, and transverses “traditional” single phenomenon-focused disciplines), which seeks solutions to continental and diasporan Africans' (and the other wretched of the earth's) problems by employing the theoretic breakthroughs of both the social sciences and the humanities.

It should be explicitly stated here, then, that I am intentionally deconstructing and reconstructing commonly held conceptions of human science in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. Which is to say that here “human science” is taken to mean *the systematic, critical study and interpretation of the thought, behavior, constructs and products created by, and/or associated with human beings*.<sup>4</sup> The human sciences encompass, but certainly are not limited to, the disciplines usually included within the social sciences and the humanities, which, for example, take into account sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, economics, communications, philosophy, history, religion, and literature, etcetera. However, my conception of the human sciences here also includes nontraditional “disciplines” or areas of human studies, such as, of course, Africana studies, but also racial studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies, women’s studies, gender studies, queer studies, sexuality studies, and postcolonial studies. At their heart, human sciences deeply endeavor to extend and expand human being’s knowledge and consciousness of their existence, their interrelationship with nonhuman species and systems, and their distinct ability to develop artifacts to immortalize human thought and culture. In other words, human sciences are areas of inquiry where human phenomena are systematically and critically studied, which also means that they are simultaneously historical and current, classical and contemporary in their concerns and in the questions and answers they raise and offer.

To speak in methodological terms, human sciences identify and analyze, as well as compare and contrast, aspects of past and present human lifeworlds and life-struggles in order to critically comprehend human phenomena and, most importantly, to improve the prospects of the human condition (Bradley and Schaefer, 1998; R. H. Brown, 1989; Button, 1991; Habermas, 1986a, 1988; Kogler and Stueber, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1983). In this sense, then, human sciences seek to provide an informed comprehension and critique of historic human existence(s) and lived-experience(s) and how they relate to present and future human reality. As is well known, the ultimate question of science is: What is reality? Consequently, the quintessential questions of human studies are: What is the reality of being human? What does it currently mean to be human? What has it meant to be human in the past? What will it mean to be human in the future and, even more, how can the study of human beings and the human phenomena of the past and the present ensure improved human conditions or, literally, human liberation for future generations? Has what it means to be human changed over time? And further, from the wretched of the earth’s frame of reference, how has racism altered what it means to be, or who counts as human? How has sexism, and patriarchy in particular, changed what it means to be, or who counts as human? How has colonialism or, rather, racial colonialism altered what it means to be, or who counts as human? And finally,

how has capitalism altered what it means to be, or who counts as human? It is in my earnest efforts to answer these crucial questions—especially the last series of queries—that I have turned to the lifework and legacy of Frantz Fanon for insights and answers. Scholars from a wide range of human sciences have put critical questions to Fanon's corpus, but curiously his work, as opposed to interpretations or, rather, misinterpretations of his work, has failed to find a foothold among Africana studies scholars, who have recurrently had a tendency to view his work, as with the work of W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James, as "Eurocentric" because he was not afraid to critically engage and deeply dialogue with European and European American theory and schools of thought.

In all intellectual honesty, therefore, it must be admitted at the outset that Africana studies has long had a reprehensibly ragged relationship with Fanon and his dialectical discourse. There have been times throughout the history of modern Africana thought when it was intellectually en vogue to vituperatively criticize various insurgent intellectual and radical political positions he held, especially his views on revolutionary violence. At other times it has been intellectually fashionable to uncritically praise Fanon for being prophetic and foresighted on certain issues. There was even a period when his biography was privileged over his radical political theory, and another when his European influences were indomitably argued to be more influential on his ideas than his Africana influences. In the present volume I am concerned with this discourse only insofar as it will enable me to illuminate the ways in which Fanon's thought and texts can be utilized to deepen and continue to develop a critical theory of contemporary society more thoroughly and compassionately concerned with the life-worlds and life-struggles of the wretched of the earth of the twenty-first century. *Forms of Fanonism*, then, is principally concerned with paradigmatic shifts and theoretic revolutions in Fanon's oeuvre and the ways in which these thought transformations provide new and novel paradigms and distinct points of departure for the deconstruction and reconstruction of contemporary Africana studies, radical politics and critical social theory in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth.

Having said all this, it should be strongly stressed that Fanon was not simply preoccupied with identifying the most pressing *problems* confronting and confounding the wretched of the earth, but he was doggedly determined in his search for *solutions* to their problems, and it is what he astonishingly offered as "solutions" to the wretched of the earth's most pressing problems that irrefutably distinguishes Fanon's oeuvre from Du Bois's brilliant body of work and undeniably helped to lay the foundation on which Cabral constructed his incredible corpus. The wide range and wide reach, the sheer scope and high level of sophistication of Fanon's radical politics and critical social theory is often simultaneously awe-inspiring and overwhelming. His



work, as with all authentic Africana studies, is *transdisciplinary*, meaning it cuts across a wide range of disciplines, such as history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, ethnic studies, racial studies, and gender studies. He developed critical theories of race, racism, and white supremacy; sexism and patriarchy; colonialism, racial colonialism, and revolutionary decolonization; capitalism, racial colonial capitalism, and Marxism; violence for domination and violence for liberation; and, “racist humanism” and revolutionary humanism. Each of the critical theories he developed were, in turn, informed by an intense and overarching concern for, and commitment to freeing human beings from their chains, whether physical or psychological or both, and creating or re-creating in them a revolutionary humanist critical consciousness of their connections to other human beings, especially those who are culturally, ethnically, racially, sexually, economically, and religiously different from one another.

As with most really “radical” politics and truly “critical” social theory, the breathtaking breadth and confounding complexity of Fanon’s forays into these areas defiantly defies quick, “conventional” categorization and, consequently, his radical politics and critical social theory have repeatedly *not* received the kinds of critical reception which they so deeply deserve, and especially within the worlds of radical politics and critical social theory. For instance, some sociologists have outright rejected Fanon’s work on account of his tendency to use literary language, discursive devices, and poetic prose to develop his arguments, where several philosophers have complained of his lack of conceptual rigor, pitfalls into fallacy, and inattention to analytical argument. Moreover, many historians contend that Fanon is too philosophical, where several psychologists advance that his analysis is too political and sociological (see P. Adams, 1970; Bhabha, 1990, 1996, 1999; Gates, 1999; Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White, 1996; Irele, 1969b; Memmi, 1971, 1973; Nghe, 1963; C. J. Robinson, 1993; Woddis, 1972; Zolberg and Zolberg, 1966). All of this goes far to lucidly illustrate why I characterize Fanon as a transdisciplinary figure whose thought and texts—which, for whatever reason, are usually found problematic from the “traditional,” single-subject disciplinary perspectives of the European and European American academies—fits nicely and neatly into what is currently being called *Africana studies* and *the Africana tradition of critical theory* (or, rather, *Africana critical theory*).<sup>5</sup>

As will be discussed in discursive detail below, *Africana critical theory* is a twenty-first-century outgrowth of efforts aimed at accenting the dialectics of deconstruction and reconstruction, and the dialectics of domination and liberation in classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African life-worlds and life-struggles. Its major preoccupation has been and remains synthesizing classical and contemporary black radical theory with black

revolutionary praxis. Consequently, Africana studies provides Africana critical theory with its philosophical foundation(s) and primary point(s) of departure, as it, Africana studies, decidedly moves beyond single-subject, one-dimensional, monodisciplinary approaches to, quite frequently, *multidimensional* and *multifactorial* Africana phenomena. On the one hand, it could be said that more than any other intellectual arena, undoubtedly, Africana studies has consistently offered the black radical tradition, especially in its Fanonian form, its highest commendations and its most meticulous and constructive criticisms. However, on the other hand, my conscience compels me to earnestly admit, Africana studies has repeatedly, and often unrepentantly, overlooked or erased key aspects of Fanon's oeuvre, especially his discourse on revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary humanism in favor of his contributions to philosophy of race, sociology of race, critical race theory, Pan-Africanism, and black nationalism.

What is all too often omitted from the scholarship on Fanon, both within and without Africana studies, are any serious discussions of the ways in which his radical politics and critical social theory is, literally, *used* by the wretched of the earth in their quests to recapture their long-denied and long-denigrated humanity. Even further, it should also be observed that there are even fewer serious discussions of the ways in which Fanon's radical politics and critical social theory have been *abused* or, rather, cunningly co-opted by the unscrupulous academicians, imperialist intelligentsia, and bourgeois bureaucrats that he, without hyperbole and high-sounding words, warned and warred against. It is, therefore, with bearing all of this in mind that I expatiate the distinct conception of Africana studies that will be employed throughout this book, because, truth be told, it is a Fanonian dialectical (re)definition of Africana studies that, in most instances, goes against the grain of past and present definitions or, rather, misnomers and mischaracterizations of Africana studies.

Recall, above I asserted that Africana studies is the body of knowledge based around critically and systematically studying a specific human group, continental and diasporan Africans, and their particular and peculiar life-worlds and life-struggles which is most modeled on or, at the very least, seems to perfectly parallel Fanon's extensive and diverse insurgent intellectual activity and revolutionary praxis because it is, to reiterate, a *transdisciplinary human science*. Here, I should like to take this line of logic one step further and more concretely synthesize Fanon's philosophy of human science with Africana studies, which, of course, would translate into a form of human studies incorrigibly obsessed with eradicating the wretchedness of the wretched of the earth and indefatigably geared toward the ultimate goal of deepening and developing the Africana tradition of critical theory. That being said, then, Africana studies is unequivocally the area of investigation, as opposed to the "academic discipline," that has most inspired Africana

critical theory's unique research methods and modes of analysis—"unique" especially when compared to other forms of critical theory that emerge from traditional, single-subject focused disciplines—because Africana studies is a *transdisciplinary human science*—that is, *an area of critical inquiry that transgresses, transverses, and ultimately transcends the arbitrary and artificial academic and disciplinary borders and boundaries, the conflicted color-lines and yawning racial chasms, and the jingoism and gender injustice of traditional single phenomenon-focused, monodisciplinary disciplines, owing to the fact that at its best it poses problems and incessantly seeks solutions on behalf of the wretched of the earth employing the theoretic innovations of both the social sciences and the humanities, as well as the political breakthroughs of grassroots radical and revolutionary social movements.*<sup>6</sup>

By critically examining Fanon's critical theories and revolutionary praxes, this book further expatiates, chronicles, and analyzes several of the significant features of Africana critical theory. Here I am primarily, and almost exclusively, concerned with his theoretical and political legacies—that is, with the ways in which he constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed theory, and the aims, objectives, and concrete outcomes of his theoretical applications and discursive practices. Therefore, in the studies that constitute *Forms of Fanonism* I confront conventional interpretations or, rather, misinterpretations of Fanon that either seek to turn him and his work into psychoanalytic theory, postcolonial theory, or a derivative of some other form of Eurocentric philosophy or theory by reinterpreting his ideas and actions from the vantage point of the black radical tradition. Employing Africana critical theory as my basic methodological and interpretive framework, I carefully and critically sift through Fanon's work, all the while focusing on its often-overlooked radical and revolutionary sociopolitical-theoretical dimensions. From this angle, Fanon is viewed as a human scientist and critical social theorist of extraordinary depth and enormous insight, especially with regard to issues involving Europe's supposed white superiority and Africa's alleged black inferiority; racism, sexism, colonialism, and neocolonialism; revolutionary self-determination and revolutionary decolonization; the nature of revolutionary nationalism and its ironic interconnections with revolutionary humanism; colonial violence and anticolonial violence; national consciousness, national culture, and national liberation; the psychology of both the colonizer and the colonized; and the prospects and problematics of a truly "postcolonial" African state and human world.

Part of my task in the remainder of this introduction entails further elaborating on the distinct conception of critical theory that will be employed in the "forms" (again, as opposed to "chapters") to follow. This conception of critical theory, Africana critical theory, is grounded in and grows out of Africana studies, and specifically the discourses of Africana philosophy, Africana social and political theory, and Africana intellectual history. Contrary to the

plethora of polemics, simplifications, mystifications, and misinterpretations of the black radical tradition, it indeed does make several significant contributions to the discourses of Africana studies *and* contemporary critical theory. In an effort to emphasize these contributions, I shall concisely outline Africana critical theory and its relationship(s) with black radical theory and black revolutionary praxis. Then, I will provide a brief insurgent intellectual and radical political biography of Fanon that accents *how*, *why*, and some of *the ways in which* he distinctly contributes to the Africana tradition of critical theory. And, finally, I conclude this introduction by emphasizing the book's recurring theme of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary humanism and outlining the distinct theoretical thrusts of each of the subsequent "forms" of Fanonism.

### AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY: ERADICATING THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH, ELIMINATING EPISTEMIC APARTHEID, AND INAUGURATING A CRITICAL THEORETICAL REVOLUTION

At its core, Africana critical theory advances and applies two major dialectical presuppositions: *the dialectics of deconstruction and reconstruction* and *the dialectics of domination and liberation*, and its major conceptual preoccupation is synthesizing classical and contemporary, national and international black radical theory with black revolutionary praxis. It will be recollected that Africana critical theory's dialectics of deconstruction and reconstruction were briefly discussed above and, consequently, need not be reiterated in great detail here. Therefore, it is to the dialectics of domination and liberation that our current discussion will be predominantly devoted. In addition, then, to being a critical theory of deconstruction and reconstruction, Africana critical theory is *theory critical of domination and discrimination in classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African life-worlds and life-struggles*. It is a style of critical theorizing, inextricably linked to progressive political practice(s), that highlights and accents black radicals' and black revolutionaries' answers to the key questions posed by the major forms and forces of domination and discrimination that have historically and continue currently to shape and mold our modern/postmodern and/or neocolonial/postcolonial world.

Africana critical theory involves not only the critique of domination and discrimination, but also a deep commitment to human liberation and radical/revolutionary social(ist) transformation. Similar to other traditions of critical social theory, Africana critical theory is concerned with thoroughly analyzing contemporary society "in light of its used and unused or abused capabilities for improving the human [and deteriorating environmental]

condition" (Marcuse, 1964, p. xlii; see also Rabaka, 2006a, 2009; Wilkerson and Paris, 2001). What distinguishes and helps to define Africana critical theory is its emphasis on the often-overlooked continental and diasporan African contributions to critical theory. It draws from critical thought and philosophical traditions rooted in the realities of continental and diasporan African history, culture, and struggle. Which, in other words, is to say that Africana critical theory inherently employs a methodological orientation and modes of interpretation that highlight and accent black radicalism and Africana philosophies, as Leonard Harris (1983) said, "born of struggle."<sup>7</sup> And, if it need be said at this point, the black liberation struggle is simultaneously national and international, transgender and transgenerational and, therefore, requires multidimensional and multiperspectival theory in which to interpret and explain the various diverse phenomena, philosophical motifs, and social and political movements characteristic of—to use Fanon's famous phrase—*l'expérience vécue du noir* ("the lived-experience of the black"), that is, the reality of constantly and simultaneously wrestling and wrangling with racism, sexism, capitalism and colonialism, among other forms of domination, oppression, and exploitation (Fanon, 2001; see also Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White, 1996; Sharpley-Whiting, 1997; Weate, 2001).

Why, one may ask, focus on black radicals and black revolutionaries' theories of social change? An initial answer to this question takes us directly to W. E. B. Du Bois's (1986) dictum, in "The Conservation of Races," that people of African origin and descent "have a contribution to make to civilization and humanity" that their historic experiences of holocaust, enslavement, colonization, and segregation have long throttled and thwarted (p. 825). He maintained that "[t]he methods which we evolved for opposing slavery and fighting prejudice are not to be forgotten, but learned for our own and others' instruction" (Du Bois, 1973, p. 144; see also Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2010, forthcoming). Hence, Du Bois solemnly suggested that black liberation struggle(s)—that is, the combined continental and diasporan African fight(s) for freedom—may have much to contribute to critical theory, and his comments here also, ironically, hit at the heart of one of the core concepts of critical theory, the *critique of domination and discrimination* (see Agger, 1992b; Malpas and Wake, 2006; O'Neill, 1976; D. Rasmussen and Swindal, 2004; Rush, 2004; Schroyer, 1975; Shumaker, 1964; Snedeker, 2004; Wexler, 1991).<sup>8</sup>

From a methodological point of view, critical theory seeks to simultaneously: (1) comprehend the established society; (2) criticize its contradictions and conflicts; and, (3) create egalitarian (most often radical/revolutionary democratic socialist) alternatives (S. Amin, 2005; Arato, 1993; Barrow, 1993; B. Cannon, 2001; J. Cohen, 1987; Gerring, 2001; Morrow, 1994; Outhwaite and Turner, 2007; Outlaw, 2005). The ultimate

emphasis on the creation and offering of alternatives brings to the fore another core concept of critical theory, its *theory of liberation and radical/revolutionary democratic social(ist) transformation* (Horkheimer, 1972, 1993; Marcuse, 1968, 1969a; Marsh, 1995, 1999; Outhwaite, 1987; Ray, 1993).<sup>9</sup> The paradigms and points of departure for critical theorists vary depending on the theorists' race, gender, intellectual interests, and political persuasions. For instance, many European critical theorists turn to Hegel, Marx, Weber, Freud, and/or the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Habermas, Horkheimer, and Marcuse), among others, because they understand these thinkers' thoughts and texts to speak in special ways to European modern and/or "postmodern" life-worlds and lived-experiences (see Held, 1980; Jay, 1984a, 1984b, 1996; Kellner, 1989; Outhwaite, 1994; Wiggerhaus, 1995; Wolin, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2006).

My work, *Africana* critical theory, utilizes the thought and texts of *Africana* intellectual-activist ancestors as critical theoretical paradigms and radical political points of departure because so much of their thought is not simply *problem-posing* but *solution-providing* where the specific life-struggles of persons of African descent (or "black people") are concerned—human life-struggles, it should be said with no hyperbole and high-sounding words, which European critical theorists (who are usually Eurocentric and often unwittingly white supremacist) have woefully neglected in their classical and contemporary critical theoretical discourse; a discourse that ironically has consistently congratulated itself on the universality of its interests, all the while, for the most part, sidestepping the centrality of racism and colonialism within its own discursive communities and out in the wider world. Moreover, my conception of critical theory is critically preoccupied with classical *Africana* thought-traditions, not only because of the long unlearned lessons they have to teach contemporary critical theorists about the dialectics of being simultaneously radically humanist and morally committed agents of a specific continent, nation, or cultural groups' liberation and social(ist) transformation, but also because the ideas and ideals of continental and diasporan African intellectual-activists of the past indisputably prefigure and provide a foundation for contemporary *Africana* studies, and *Africana* philosophy in specific. In fact, in many ways, *Africana* critical theory, besides being grounded in and growing out of the discourse(s) of *Africana* studies, can be said to be an offshoot of *Africana* philosophy, which according to the acclaimed African American philosopher, Lucius Outlaw (1997a), is:

a "gathering" notion under which to situate the articulations (writings, speeches, etc.), and traditions of the same, of Africans and peoples of African descent collectively, as well as the sub-discipline or field-forming, tradition-defining, tradition-organizing reconstructive efforts which are (to be) regarded

as philosophy. However, "Africana philosophy" is to include, as well, the work of those persons who are neither African nor of African descent but who recognize the legitimacy and importance of the issues and endeavors that constitute the disciplinary activities of African or [African Caribbean or] African American philosophy and contribute to the efforts—persons whose work justifies their being called "Africanists." Use of the qualifier "Africana" is consistent with the practice of naming intellectual traditions and practices in terms of the national, geographic, cultural, racial, and/or ethnic descriptor or identity of the persons who initiated and were/are the primary practitioners—and/or are the subjects and objects—of the practices and traditions in question (e.g., "American," "British," "French," "German," or "continental" philosophy). (p. 64)

Africana critical theory is distinguished from Africana philosophy by the fact that critical theory cannot be situated within the world of conventional academic disciplines and divisions of labor. It transverse and transgresses boundaries between traditional disciplines and accents the interconnections and intersections of philosophy, history, politics, economics, the arts, psychology, and sociology, among other disciplines and/or areas of critical inquiry. Critical theory is contrasted with mainstream, monodisciplinary social theory through its multidisciplinary methodology and its efforts to develop a comprehensive dialectical theory of domination and liberation specific to the special needs of contemporary society (see Agger, 2006; J. C. Alexander, 2001; Blackburn, 1972; Bronner, 2002; Habermas, 1975, 1979, 1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1987b, 1988, 1989a, 1989c; Rush, 2004). Africana philosophy has a very different agenda, one that seems to me more metaphilosophical than philosophical at this point, because it entails theorizing-on-tradition and tradition-reconstruction more than tradition extension and expansion through the production of normative theory and critical pedagogical praxis aimed at application (i.e., immediate radical/revolutionary self- and social transformation).<sup>10</sup>

The primary purpose of critical theory is to relate radical thought to revolutionary practice, which is to say that its focus—philosophical, social, and political—is always and ever the search for ethical alternatives and viable moral solutions to the most pressing problems of our present age. Critical theory is not about, or rather *should not* be about allegiance to intellectual ancestors and/or ancient schools of thought, but about using *all* (without regard to race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and/or religious affiliation) accumulated radical thought and revolutionary practices in the interest of human liberation and social(ist) transformation. With this in mind, Cornel West's (1982) contentions concerning "Afro-American critical thought" offer an outline for the type of theorizing that Africana critical theory endeavors:

The object of inquiry for Afro-American critical thought is the past and present, the doings and the sufferings of African people in the United States. Rather

than a new scientific discipline or field of study, it is a genre of writing, a textuality, a mode of discourse that interprets, describes, and evaluates Afro-American life in order comprehensively to understand and effectively to transform it. It is not concerned with "foundations" or transcendental "grounds" but with how to build its language in such a way that the configuration of sentences and the constellation of paragraphs themselves create a textuality and distinctive discourse which are a material force for Afro-American freedom. (p. 15)

Though Africana critical theory encompasses and is concerned with much more than the life-worlds and life-struggles of "African people in the United States," West's comments here are helpful, as they give us a glimpse at the kinds of transdisciplinary connections critical theorists make or, rather, *should* make in terms of their ideas having an impact and significant influence on society. Africana critical theory is not thought-for-thought's sake (as it often seems is the case with so much contemporary philosophy—Africana philosophy notwithstanding), but *critical thought-for-life-and-liberation's sake*. It is not only a style of writing which focuses on radicalism and revolution but, even more, it (re)presents a new way of *thinking* and *doing* revolution that is based and constantly being built on the best of the radicalisms and revolutions of the past, and the black radical and black revolutionary past in particular.

From West's frame of reference, "Afro-American philosophy expresses the particular American variation of European modernity that Afro-Americans helped shape in this country and must contend with in the future. While it might be possible to articulate a competing Afro-American philosophy based principally on African norms and notions, it is likely that the result would be theoretically thin" (p. 24). Quite contrary to West's comments, Africana critical theory intrepidly represents and registers as that "possible articul[ation] of a competing [Africana] philosophy based principally on African norms and notions," and though he thinks that the results will be "theoretically thin," Africana critical theory—faithfully following Fanon (1965, 1967, 1968, 1969) and Cabral (1972, 1973, 1979)—understands this risk to be part of the price the wretched of the earth must be willing to pay for their (intellectual, political, psychological, and physical) freedom.<sup>11</sup> Intellectually audacious, especially considering the widespread Eurocentrism and white supremacism of contemporary conceptual generation, Africana critical theory does not acquiesce or give priority and special privilege to European history, culture and thought. It turns to the long overlooked thought and texts of women and men of African descent who have developed and contributed radical thought and revolutionary practices that could possibly aid us in our endeavors to continuously create an *antiracist, antisexist, anticapitalist, anticolonialist, and sexual orientation-sensitive critical theory of contemporary society*.



Above and beyond all of the aforementioned, Africana critical theory is about offering alternatives to *what is* (domination and discrimination), by projecting possibilities of *what ought to be* and/or *what could be* (human liberation and radical/revolutionary social transformation). To reiterate, it is not afraid, to put it as plainly as possible, to critically engage and dialogue deeply with European and/or other cultural groups' thought-traditions. In fact, it often finds critical cross-cultural dialogue and astute appropriation (i.e., *Africanization*) necessary considering the historical conundrums and current shared conditions and shared crises of the modern or postmodern, transnational, and almost completely multicultural world (see Goldberg, 1994; Goldberg and Solomos, 2002; McLaren, 1997). Africana critical theory, quite simply, does not privilege or give priority to European and/or other cultural groups' thought-traditions since its philosophical foci and primary purpose revolves around the search for solutions to the most pressing social and political problems in continental and diasporan African life-worlds and lived-experiences in the present age.

### AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF AFRICANA KNOWLEDGE: ON EPISTEMIC STRENGTHS AND THEORETIC WEAKNESSES WITHIN THE AFRICANA WORLD OF IDEAS (AND ACTIONS)

Africana critical theory navigates many theoretic spaces that extend well beyond the established intellectual borders and boundaries of Africana studies as it is conventionally conceived. At this point, it is clearly characterized by an *epistemic openness* to theories and methodologies usually understood to be incompatible with one another. Besides providing it with a simultaneously creative and critical tension, Africana critical theory's *antithetical conceptual contraction* (i.e., its utilization of concepts perceived to be contradictory to, and/or in conflict and competing with one another) also gives it its theoretic rebelliousness and untamable academic quality. Which is to say that Africana critical theory exists or, rather, is able to exist well beyond the borders and boundaries of the academy and academic disciplines because the bulk of its theoretic base, that is, its primary points of departure, are the ideas and actions of Africana (among other wretched of the earth) intellectual-activists entrenched in radical political practices and revolutionary social movements. The word "theory," then, in the appellation "Africana critical theory" is being defined and, perhaps, radically refined, for specific *transdisciplinary human scientific* discursive purposes and practices. This is extremely important to point out because there has been a long intellectual history of chaos concerning the nature and tasks of "theory" in Africana studies.

To an Africana critical theorist, it seems highly questionable, if not simply downright silly at this juncture in the history of Africana thought, to seek a theoretical Holy Grail that will serve as a panacea to our search for the secrets to being, culture, politics, society or, even more, liberation. Taking our cue from W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James, it may be better to conceive of theory as an “instrument” or, as Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral would have it, a “weapon” used to attack certain targets of domination and discrimination. Theories are, among many other things, optics, ways of seeing; they are perspectives that illuminate specific phenomena. However, as with any perspective, position, or standpoint, each theory has its blind spots and lens limitations, what we call in the contemporary discourse of Africana philosophy, *theoretical myopia*.

Recent theoretical debates in Africana studies have made us painfully aware of the fact that most theories emerging from academe are almost invariably discipline-specific constructs and products, created in particular intellectual contexts, for particular intellectual purposes (see Aldridge and James, 2007; Aldridge and Young, 2000; Anderson and Stewart, 2007; Asante and Karenga, 2006; Bobo and Michel, 2000; Bobo, Hudley, and Michel, 2004; Conyers, 2005; P. A. Hall, 1999; Gordon and Gordon, 2006a, 2006b; Marable, 2000, 2005). Contemporary Africana thought has also enabled us to see that theories are always grounded in and grow out of specific social discourses, political practices, and national and international institutions. In *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy*, the Eritrean philosopher, Tsenay Serequeberhan (1994), correctly contends that “political ‘neutrality’ in philosophy, as in most other things, is at best a ‘harmless’ naïveté, and at worst a pernicious subterfuge for hidden agendas” (p. 4). Each discipline has an academic agenda. Therefore, the theories and methodologies of a discipline promote the development of that particular discipline. Theories emerging from traditional disciplines that claim to provide an eternal philosophical foundation or universal and neutral knowledge transcendent of historical horizons, cultural conditions and social struggles, or a metatheory (i.e., a theory about theorizing) that purports absolute truth that transcends the interests of specific theorists and their theories, have been and are being vigorously rejected by Africana studies scholars and students (see Asante, 1990, 1998, 2003a, 2007a; Azevedo, 2005; Ba Nikongo, 1997; Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi, 2008; Conyers, 2003; Gordon, 2006c; Norment, 2007a, 2007b; Zuberi, 2001). Theory, then, as Serequeberhan (1994) says of philosophy, is a “critical and explorative engagement of one’s own cultural specificity and lived historicalness. It is a critically aware explorative appropriation of our cultural, political, and historical existence” (p. 23).<sup>12</sup>

Theoretic discourse does not simply fall from the sky like windblown rain, leaving no traces of the direction from which it came and its initial point of departure. On the contrary, it registers as, and often radically rep-

resents, critical concerns interior to epistemologies and experiences arising out of a specific cultural condition and historical horizon within which it is located and discursively situated. In other words, similar to a finely crafted woodcarving or hand-woven garment, theories retain the intellectual and cultural markings of their makers, and though they can and do “travel” and “cross borders,” they are optimal in their original settings and when applied to the original phenomena that inspired their creation (Giroux, 1992; Said, 1999, 2000).

A more modest conception of theory sees it, then, as an instrument (or, as Michel Foucault would have it, a “tool”) to help us illuminate and navigate specific social spaces, pointing to present and potential problems, interpreting and criticizing them, and ultimately offering ethical and egalitarian alternatives to them (e.g., see Foucault, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1988, 1997, 1998, 2000).<sup>13</sup> At their best, theories not only illuminate social realities, but they *should* help individuals make sense of their life-worlds and life-struggles. To do this effectively, theories usually utilize metaphor, allegory, images, symbols, discursive concepts, counterarguments, conversational language, rhetorical devices, and narratives. Modern metatheory often accents the interesting fact that theories have literary components and qualities: they narrate or tell stories, employ rhetoric and semiotics and, similar to literature, often offer accessible interpretations of classical and contemporary life (Bocchi and Ceruti, 2002; Riessman, 2007; Skinner, 1990). However, theories also have cognitive and kinship components that allow them to connect with other theories’ concepts and common critical features, as when a variety of disparate theories of Africana studies discourse raise questions concerning race and racism, or questions of identity and liberation (Aldridge and James, 2007; Aldridge and Young, 2000; Asante and Karenga, 2006; Gordon and Gordon, 2006a, 2006c; Marable, 2005).

There are many different types of theory, from literary theory to linguistic theory, cultural theory to aesthetic theory, and political theory to postmodern theory. Africana critical theory is a critical conceptual framework that seeks an ongoing synthesis of the most emancipatory elements of a wide range of *social and political theory* in the anti-imperialist interests of continental and diasporan Africans in specific, and the other wretched of the earth in general. This means that Africana critical theory often identifies and isolates the social and political implications of various theories, some of which were not created to have any concrete connections with the social and political world (and certainly not the Africana world), but currently do as a consequence of the ways they have been appropriated, (re)articulated, and, in terms of Africana critical theory, *decolonized* and *Africanized*.

Here, it is extremely important to recall the often hidden history of theory. Theories are instruments and, therefore, can be put to use in a multiplicity of manners. Historically, theories have always traveled outside

of their original contexts, but two points of importance should be made here. The first point has to do with something the Palestinian literary theorist and political activist Edward Said (1999, 2000) said long ago, and that is that theories lose some of their original power when taken out of their original intellectual and cultural contexts, because the sociopolitical situation is different, the suffering and/or struggling people are different, and the aims and objectives of their movements are different. The second point is reflexive and has to do with the modern moment in the history of theory: never before have so many theories traveled so many mental miles away from their intellectual milieus. This speaks to the new and novel theoretical times that we are passing through. Part of what we have to do, then, is identify those theories ("instruments" and/or "weapons," if you prefer) that will aid us most in our struggles against racism, sexism, capitalism, and colonialism, among other epochal (neo)imperial issues.

The turn toward and emphasis on social and political theory suggests several of Africana critical theory's key concerns, such as the development of a synthetic sociopolitical discourse that earnestly and accessibly addresses issues arising from: everyday black life and experiences in white supremacist societies; women's daily lives in male supremacist (or, if you prefer, patriarchal) societies; and, the commonalities of and the distinct differences between black life in racial colonialist and racial capitalist countries, among other issues. Social and political *theoretical* discourse is important because it provides individuals and groups with topographies of their social and political terrains. This discourse, especially when it is "critical," also often offers crucial concepts and categories that aid individuals and groups in critically engaging and radically altering their social and political worlds (see Agger, 2006; J. C. Alexander, 2001; Birt, 2002; Blackburn, 1972; Calhoun, 1995; Dant, 2003; P. H. Collins, 1998; Ra. Collins, 2000; Elliott, 2003; Rhoads, 1991; Sica, 1998; Ba. S. Turner, 1996).

Social and political theories, in a general sense, are simultaneously heuristic and discursive devices for exploring and explaining the social and political dimensions of the human experience. They accent social conditions and can often provoke social action and political praxis. Social and political theories endeavor to provide a panoramic picture that enables individuals to conceptualize and contextualize their life-worlds and life-struggles within the wider field of social and political, as well as historical and cultural relations and institutions. Additionally, social and political theories can aid individuals in their efforts to understand and alter particular sociopolitical events and artifacts by analyzing their receptions, relations, and ongoing effects.

In addition to sociopolitical theoretical discourse, Africana critical theory draws directly from the discourse on *dialectics* because it seeks to understand and, if necessary, alter society as a whole, not simply some isolated

or culturally confined series of phenomena. The emphasis on dialectics also sends a signal to those social theorists and others who are easily intellectually intimidated by efforts to grasp and grapple with the whole of human history, culture, and our current crises, that Africana critical theory is not in any sense a “conventional” critical social theory but, unapologetically, *a social activist and political praxis-promoting theory* that seriously seeks the radical/revolutionary redistribution of cultural capital, social wealth, and political power. The dialectical dimension of Africana critical theory enables it to make connections between seemingly isolated and unrelated parts of society, demonstrating how, for instance, supposedly neutral social terrain, such as the education industries, the entertainment industries, the prison industrial complex, the political electoral process, or the realm of religion are sites and sources of ruling race, ruling gender, and/or ruling class privilege, prestige, and power.<sup>14</sup>

Dialectics, the art of demonstrating the interconnectedness of parts to each other and to the overarching system or framework as a whole, distinguishes Africana critical theory from other theories in Africana studies because it simultaneously searches for progressive and retrogressive aspects of Africana, Eurocentric, and/or other cultural groups’ thought-traditions and systems of knowledge. This means, then, that Africana critical theory offers an external and internal critique, which is also to say that it is unrepentantly *a self-reflexive social and political theory*: a social and political theory that relentlessly reexamines and refines its own philosophical foundations, methods, positions, and presuppositions. Africana critical theory’s dialectical dimension also distinguishes it from other traditions and versions of critical theory because the connections it makes between social and political parts and the social and political whole are those that directly and profoundly affect continental and diasporan Africans in particular, and the other wretched of the earth in general. No other tradition or version of radical politics or critical social theory has historically or currently claims to highlight and accent *sites of domination* and *sources of liberation* in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth.

### THE WEAPON OF THEORY: TOWARD A CABRALIAN CONCEPTION OF AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY’S AVERSION TO EPISTEMIC EXCLUSIVENESS AND INTELLECTUAL INSULARITY

In “The Weapon of Theory,” the Cape Verdean and Guinea-Bissau freedom fighter, Amílcar Cabral (1979), asserted: “Every practice gives birth to a theory. If it is true that a revolution can fail, even though it be nurtured on perfectly conceived theories, no one has yet successfully practiced revolution without a

revolutionary theory" (p. 123).<sup>15</sup> Africana critical theory is a "revolutionary theory" and a blazing beacon symbolizing the birth of a theoretical revolution in Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory. Its basic aims and objectives speak to its radical character and critical qualities. It is unique in that it is theory preoccupied with promoting social activism and political practice geared toward radical/revolutionary social transformation and the development of an ethical and egalitarian anti-imperialist society by pointing to: (1) what needs to be transformed; (2) what strategies and tactics might be most useful in the transformative efforts; and, (3) which agents and agencies could potentially carry out the radical/revolutionary social transformation.

Following Cabral (1972, 1973, 1979), consequently, Africana critical theory conceives of theory as a "weapon," and the history of Africana thought, and the black radical thought-tradition in particular, as its essential arsenal. As with any arsenal, a weapon is chosen or left behind based on the specifics of the mission, such as the target, terrain, and time-sensitivity. The same may be said concerning "the weapon of theory." Different theories can be used for different purposes in disparate situations. The usefulness or uselessness of a particular theory depends on the task(s) at hand and whether the theory in question is deemed appropriate for the task(s). Theory can be extremely useful, but it is indeed a great and grave mistake to believe that there is a grand narrative, supertheory, or theoretical god that will provide the interpretive or explanatory keys to the political and intellectual kingdom (or queendom). Instead of arrogantly arguing for a new supertheory, as so many theories emerging from European modernity and post-modernity seem to, Africana critical theory humbly advocates an ongoing synthesis of the most moral and radical political elements of classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African thought-traditions with other cultural groups' progressive (i.e., radical/revolutionary) thought and political practices in the interest of critically engaging and ethically altering local *and* global, national *and* international, African *and* human problems in the present age.

Contemporary society requires a continuous and increasingly high level of sociopolitical mapping because of the intensity of recent politico-ideological maneuvers—what the Italian critical theorist, Antonio Gramsci (2000, pp. 222–45), identified as "wars of position" and "wars of maneuver"—and the urgency of present socioeconomic transformations.<sup>16</sup> History has unfolded to this in-between epoch of immense and provocative change, and many theories of contemporary society outline and attempt to explain an aspect of this change, and, as a result, are relevant with regard to certain social phenomena. But, truth be told, no single theory captures the complete *constantly changing* sociopolitical picture, though there are plethora that religiously profess to and promise to provide their adherents and con-

verts with theoretical salvation in the sin-sick world of theory, as it were. It should be stated outright: *All theories have blind spots and lens limitations, and all theories (theoretically) make critical conceptual contributions.* Consequently, Africana critical theory advocates combining classical and contemporary theory from diverse academic disciplines and intellectual-activist traditions; though Africana thought-traditions, and the black radical tradition in specific, it must be made clear, is always and ever Africana critical theory's primary point of departure. My conception of critical social theory keeps in mind that the mappings of each theory potentially provide specific new and novel insights but, it must be admitted, these insights alone are not enough to affect the type of radical/revolutionary sociopolitical change required. It is with this understanding that Africana critical theory eschews *epistemic exclusiveness* and *intellectual insularity*, and instead emphasizes *epistemic openness* and, on principle, practices *antithetical conceptual contraction* by generously drawing from the diverse discursive formations and theoretic practices of a wide range of classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African thought-traditions, such as: African, African American, African Caribbean, Afro-Asian, Afro-European, Afro-Latino, Afro-Native American, and Africana philosophy and theory; Negritude; revolutionary Pan-Africanism; prophetic pragmatism; womanism; black feminism; black postmodernism; black existentialism; black radicalism; black Marxism; revolutionary black nationalism; black liberation theology; critical race theory; philosophy of race; sociology of race; psychology of race; anthropology of race; history of race; and geography of race, among others.

Africana critical theory relentlessly examines its own aims, objectives, positions, and methods, constantly putting them in question in an effort to radically refine and revise them. It is, thus, epistemically open, flexible and nondogmatic, constantly exhibiting the ability to critically engage opposing theories and appropriate and incorporate progressive strains and reject retrogressive strains from its rivals. It is here that Africana critical theory exhibits its theoretic sophistication and epistemic strength and stamina. Along with the various Africana theoretical perspectives that Africana critical theory employs as its primary points of departure, it also often critically engages many of the other major, more "mainstream" theoretical discourses of the modern moment, such as: Marxism, feminism, pragmatism, historicism, existentialism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, semiotics, Frankfurt School critical theory, sociology of knowledge, critical pedagogy, structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism, among others.

Africana critical theory engages other, non-Africana discursive formations and theoretic practices because it is aware of the long history of appropriation and rearticulation within Africana thought-traditions and systems of knowledge. This takes us right back to the critical debates raging all around

about black people employing white theory to explore and explain “black” experiences (Asante and Karenga, 2006; Conyers, 2003, 2005; Gordon and Gordon, 2006a, 2006c; Rojas, 2007; Rooks, 2006). Instead of simply sidestepping this important intellectual history, Africana critical theory conscientiously confronts it in an effort to understand and, if need be, alter it in an attempt to actualize black liberation on terms interior to contemporary Africana life-worlds and life-struggles. This brings to mind the Caribbean American philosopher Lewis Gordon’s (1997a) contention that,

theory, any theory, gains its sustenance from that which it offers *for* and *through* the lived-reality of those who are expected to formulate it. Africana philosophy’s history of Christian, Marxist, Feminist, Pragmatist, Analytical, and Phenomenological thought has therefore been a matter of what specific dimensions each had to offer the existential realities of theorizing blackness. For Marxism, for instance, it was not so much its notion of “science” over all other forms of socialist theory, nor its promise of a world to win, that may have struck a resonating chord in the hearts of black Marxists. It was, instead, Marx and Engels’ famous encomium of the proletarians’ having nothing to lose but their chains. Such a call has obvious affinity for a people who have been so strongly identified with chattel slavery. (p. 4, emphasis in original)

It is important to understand and critically engage *why* continental and diasporan Africans have historically and continue currently to embrace Eurocentric theory. Saying simply that blacks who did or who do embrace some aspects of white theory are intellectually insane or have an intellectual inferiority complex logically leads us to yet another discourse on black pathology; all the while we will be, however inadvertently, sidestepping the confrontation and critique of white supremacy and/or antiblack racism as a history-making and culture-shaping global imperialism (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2003; Bonilla-Silva and Doane, 2003; Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi, 2008; C. W. Mills, 1999, 2001, 2003b). Persons of African origin and descent have been preoccupied in the modern moment with struggles against various forms and forces of domination, oppression, and exploitation. They, therefore, have been and remain attracted to theories that they understand to promise or provide tools to combat their domination, oppression, and/or exploitation. Though blacks in white supremacist societies are often rendered anonymous and/or are virtually invisible, they do not have a “collective mind” and have reached no consensus concerning which theories make the best “weapons” to combat their domination, oppression, and/or exploitation.<sup>17</sup> This means, then, that the way is epistemically open, and that those blacks who embrace or appropriate an aspect of white theory are not theoretically “lost” but, perhaps, simply employing the theoretical tools they understand to be most applicable and most



readily available to them in their neocolonial contexts and their particular emancipatory efforts.

Fanon spoke to this issue in a special way in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he declared “the discoveries of Freud are of no use to us here” in the hyper-racialized and hypercolonized life-worlds and life-struggles of black folk, and in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he asserted “Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem. Everything up to and including the very nature of precapitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must here be thought out again” (1967, p. 104; 1968, p. 40). Fanon (1967) did not find anything of use in Freud for the particular kind of critical theoretical work he was doing in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and he even went so far to say that “there is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white man to that of the black” (p. 151). However, he was able to employ some aspects of Marxism for the kind of critical theoretical work he was doing in *The Wretched of the Earth*, but—and this is the main point—he critically engaged Marxism from his own critical subjective and radical political position as a hyper-racialized and hypercolonized black man in a white supremacist capitalist and colonialist world. In other words, his Africanity, or non-Europeanness, was never left in abeyance or abandoned for the sake of Eurocentric theoretical synthesis. Approaching Marxism from this Africana critical theoretical angle, essentially employing it as a tool and not as a tenet, Fanon was able to extend and expand the critical theoretical and radical political range and reach of Marxism; more than merely Africanizing it, but instead seminally building on and moving beyond it to critically engage phenomena, life-worlds, and life-struggles that Marx and his Eurocentric heirs have shamefully shoved to the intellectual outposts of their quite quarantined racial and colonial (and patriarchal) world of ideas.

It is quite possible, even with the advent and academization of Africana studies from the mid-1960s to the present, that many contemporary intellectuals and activists of African descent are unaware of Africana intellectual history, and especially Africana critical thought-traditions, which is very different than saying that they are unattracted to, or find little or nothing of use in Africana critical thought-traditions. Contemporary Africana theorists must take as one of their primary tasks making classical and contemporary black radical and Africana critical thought-traditions more accessible and attractive, particularly to blacks but also to non-African (i.e., “Africanist”) anti-imperialist others. There simply is no substitute for the kinds of easily intelligible and epistemically open critical theoretical genealogies and contemporary conceptual generations that Africana studies scholars must produce and propound to the Africana intelligentsia, the masses of black folk, well-meaning antiracist whites, and multicultural, multiracial, and transethnic others if, not simply Africana studies, but the souls of humble

and hardworking black folk and the other wretched of the earth are to survive and continue to contribute to human culture and civilization.

Africana critical theory engages a wide and diverse array of theory emerging from the insurgent intellectuals of the academy and the activist-intellectuals of radical and revolutionary sociopolitical movements. It understands each theory to offer enigmatic and illuminating insights because the more theory a theorist has at her or his disposal, the more issues, objects and subjects they can address, the more tasks they can perform, and the more theoretical targets they can terminate. As stated above, theories are optics or perspectives, and it is with this understanding that Africana critical theory contends that bringing a multiplicity of perspectives to bear on a phenomenon promises a greater grasp and a more thorough engagement and understanding of that phenomenon. For instance, many theories of race and racism arising from the discourse(s) of Africana studies have historically exhibited a serious weakness where sexism, and particularly patriarchy, is concerned. This situation was, to a certain extent, remedied and these theories were strengthened when Africana women's studies scholars diagnosed these one-dimensional and uni-gendered theories of race and racism, and coupled them with their own unique antiracist interpretations of women's domination and discrimination and gender relations (see Butler and Walter, 1991; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Hull, Scott, and Smith, 1982; J. James and Sharpley-Whiting, 2000; Nnaemeka, 1998). Indeed, this is an ongoing effort, and clearly there is no consensus in Africana studies as to the importance of critically engaging gender domination and discrimination in continental and diasporan African life-worlds and life-struggles. But, whether we have consensus or not, which we probably never will, the key concern to keep in mind is that though it may not be theoretically fashionable to engage certain phenomena, it does not necessarily mean that it is not theoretically and/or practically important to engage that phenomena. As *critical* theorists part of our task is to bring unseen or often overlooked issues to the fore. In order to do this, we may have to develop new concepts and new categories so that others might be able to coherently comprehend these enigmatic issues.

In calling for bringing many theories to bear on a phenomenon, Africana critical theory is not eluding the fact that in many instances a single theory may be the best source of insight. For example, Pan-Africanism offers a paradigm for analyzing the history of Africana anticolonialism and decolonization; where black Marxism accents the interconnections of racism and capitalism in black life; while black feminism most often speaks to the intersection(s) of racism and sexism in black women's life-worlds and life-struggles. Africana critical theory chooses to deploy a theory based on its overarching aims and objectives, which are constantly informed by the ongoing quests for human freedom and black liberation. It is not interested in

an eclectic combination of theories—that is, *theoretical eclecticism*—simply for the sake of theoretical synthesis and contributing to the world of ideas, but instead its earnest interest lies in radical and revolutionary social(ist) transformation in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth, and especially those of African origin and descent.

It is essential to observe how intellectual-activist ancestors prefigured and provide a foundation for Africana critical theory of contemporary society. However, as important as critically engaging their respective theories and praxes is for the development of Africana critical theory, conceptual engagements should not be undertaken without due attention being given to their life-histories and personal journeys. It could be easily argued that black life-worlds and life-struggles within white supremacist societies are approached or, rather, reproached in grossly reductive terms and under the cruelest conditions of epistemic apartheid. As was discussed above, theories almost invariably represent the worldviews or value systems of the theorists who conceptually constructed them. It is in this sense, then, that studying theorists' life-histories, intellectual milieux and cultural conditions along with their theories within the Africana world of ideas is heightened and proves to be extremely revealing. The paradigms and points of departure that Africana critical theory contracts are not only intellectual but also practical; meaning, based on both literary and linguistic texts (books and speeches) and political and life-practice texts (activism and transformative actions). It is with this in mind that we now turn to a brief exploration of Fanon's insurgent intellectual and radical political biography with an eye on the ways in which it provides us with insights into *why*, *what*, and *how* he innovatively contributed to the Africana tradition of critical theory.

### THE FACTS OF FANON'S REVOLUTIONARY BLACKNESS: TOWARD A BRIEF INSURGENT INTELLECTUAL AND RADICAL POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

Frantz Fanon was born in the folds of French colonialism on July 20, 1925, on the Caribbean island of Martinique. Unlike W. E. B. Du Bois and Amílcar Cabral, but very similar to his Caribbean comrades C. L. R. James and Aime Césaire, his family was firmly "upper-middle class" and, in the "typically complicated Martiniquan manner," hyper-preoccupied with all the questions concerning race, color, and class (Gendzier, 1973, p. 10; see also Macey, 2004). Fanon's father, Félix Casimir Fanon, was of mixed Indian and Martiniquan origin, while his mother, Elénore Médélice Fanon, was of Alsatian extraction, herself "the illegitimate daughter of parents of mixed blood" and heritages (Gendzier, 1973, p. 10). Frantz Fanon's first name, of course, reflected his mother's Alsatian ancestry. He was the fourth, youngest,

and middle son of his parent's eight children, and—in keeping with the unique color complex(es) of the Caribbean, it is extremely important to observe—he was the darkest member of his family. The “fact of [his] blackness,” as he himself put it in *Black Skin, White Masks*, was never allowed to be forgotten, neither among his family and friends, nor, most especially, among the Martiniquan public at large.

At age eighteen Fanon enlisted in the Free French unit, then believing that “his own freedom, that of Martinique and that of France were inextricably bound up together” (Macey, 2000, p. 91). Between 1944 and 1946 he served in Algeria, where he also came into contact with Senegalese soldiers. This, to say the least, was an eye-opening and life-altering experience for him, and it was there in Africa that he began to develop a critical consciousness of colonialism and its physical and psychological effects on the colonized. After he was wounded and discharged from the French Army, he opted to study psychiatry because its synthesis of medicine, psychology, and philosophy, he believed, would enable him to pursue his increasing interests in the psychological or, rather, the psychopathological effects of racism and colonialism on *both* the colonizer and the colonized. He studied first in Paris and then in Lyon, between 1947 and 1951. Following the successful completion of his qualifying exams, Fanon began to practice initially in Saint Ylie, France, then in Pontorson, Normandy, and finally in Blida-Joinville, Algeria, where he was appointed *Chef de service* in 1953. In 1952 he was wed to a Frenchwoman of Corsican-gypsy descent, Marie-Josèphe Dublé (known to all as Josie), whom he met in 1949 when she was eighteen years old and still a classics student at her lycée (Cherki, 2006; Geismar, 1969, 1971).

It was in Algeria as the *Chef de service* at the Psychiatric Hospital of Blida-Joinville that Fanon acquired significant clinical experience and engaged in seminal psychiatric experiments through his work with 165 European women and 220 Algerian men. During these decisive years Fanon honed his ideas on the social, political, and cultural causes and effects of many mental illnesses in colonial or, rather, *racial colonial* contexts. He resigned from the psychiatric hospital in 1956 to join the Front de Libération Nationale (the FLN), the revolutionary anticolonial movement that successfully waged armed struggle for an independent (and Islamic) Algeria free from French racial colonialism. Fanon was not content with the supposed neutrality his status as a medical doctor offered him. In his letter of resignation he unequivocally intoned, “There comes a time when silence becomes dishonesty” (Fanon, 1969, p. 54). He was determined to use his military and medical training in the interest of Algeria's liberation and all of Africa's revolutionary decolonization (see P. Adams, 1970; Bulhan, 1980b, 1985; Hopton, 1995; Macey, 1999; Razanajao, Postel, and Allen, 1996; Ucelli, 2001; Youssef and Fadl, 1996).

Fanon began his formal association with the FLN as early as 1954 when he “counseled” (in the psychiatric sense) several Algerian freedom fighters suffering from “mental problems” as a result of the war. David Macey (2000), a leading Fanon biographer, maintains that Fanon’s “growing commitment to the nationalist movement took the classic pattern of an initial contact, the rendering of minor ‘favors’ and the establishment of both trust and deeper involvement” (p. 265). Before long Fanon was fully integrated into the FLN, working as a medic, freedom fighter, revolutionary writer, and Algerian ambassador. He addressed the All-African Peoples Congress held in Accra, Ghana, from December 8 to 12, 1958, as a member of the Algerian delegation. There he rendezvoused with acclaimed Pan-African revolutionaries, such as Patrice Lumumba, Tom M’Boya, Roberto Holden, and, of course, the then-President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah.

It was at this crucial Pan-African congress that Fanon forcefully argued that the Algerian struggle for freedom was, indeed, integral to the overarching Pan-African movement, and introduced what would later become his controversial views on anticolonial violence and revolutionary decolonization. Although the congress of over two hundred delegates, representing twenty-five countries, as a rule emphasized nonviolence and negotiation with European imperial powers, especially Lumumba, M’Boya and Nkrumah, Fanon shocked and awed his audience with passionate pleas, exhorting the delegates to “never rule out recourse to violence” (p. 368). For Fanon, racism and colonialism at their core are nothing other than outright, naked violence, both physical and psychological violence. Therefore, “[f]reedom fighters and nationalist leaders had to adopt *all* forms of struggle and could not rely on peaceful negotiations alone” (p. 368, emphasis in original).

Out of his insistence that “[f]reedom fighters and nationalist leaders had to adopt *all* forms of struggle and could not rely on peaceful negotiations alone” the “African Legion” project was born. Often-overlooked in the commentary—critical or otherwise—on Fanon, Macey contends that “the idea of an ‘African Legion’ came to mean a great deal to Fanon” (p. 369). As much is evident when we turn to the concluding section of Fanon’s (1969) essay entitled, “Accra: Africa Affirms Its Unity and Defines Its Strategy” in *Toward the African Revolution*, where he wrote:

In the settlement of colonies of the type of Kenya, Algeria, and South Africa there is unanimity: only armed struggle will bring about the defeat of the occupying nation. And the African Legion, the principle of which was adopted in Accra, is the concrete response of the African peoples to the will to colonial domination of the Europeans. In deciding to create a corps of volunteers in all the territories the African peoples mean clearly to manifest their solidarity with one another, thus expressing the realization that national liberation is linked to the liberation of the continent. (pp. 156–57)

Shortly after his tendentious success at the Accra conference, Fanon was appointed the Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne's (the GPRA's) ambassador to Ghana in 1959, and went on to represent the GPRA at several international conferences, including: the Conference for Peace and Security, Accra, Ghana, April 7–10, 1960; the Afro-Asian Conference, Conakry, Guinea, April 12–15, 1960; and the Third Conference of Independent African States, Addis Abba, Ethiopia, June 17–19, 1960. Although it has often been downplayed by Fanon's Eurocentric critics, from the foregoing it can be easily ascertained that he was, indeed, a Pan-Africanist. However, I should quickly quip, his Pan-Africanism was often at loggerheads with many of the more nationalist-oriented leaders of his time.<sup>18</sup> It should also be pointed out that though he was not religious in any sense of the word, he was willing to devote his life to a liberation struggle that had as its end goal an Islamic state. Clearly, then, Fanon was a complex and complicated person, committed, perhaps above all else, to racially colonized peoples' right to self-definition, self-determination, and "true" decolonization. In neglecting Fanon's nuanced engagement of Pan-Africanism, African socialism, and Algerian nationalism, many of his critics have created or, rather, insidiously invented an ahistorical, fantastic, often inexcusably Eurocentric and, let it be said, extremely violent Fanon.

Fanon's four books—*Black Skin, White Masks*, *A Dying Colonialism*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and *Toward the African Revolution*—reveal a dialectical thinker and critical theorist of extraordinary depth and exceptional insight, especially with regard to issues involving Europe's supposed white superiority and Africa's alleged black inferiority; racism, sexism, colonialism, and neocolonialism; revolutionary self-determination and revolutionary decolonization; the nature of revolutionary nationalism and its interconnections with revolutionary humanism; colonial violence and anticolonial violence; national consciousness, national culture, and national liberation; the psychology of both the colonizer and the colonized; and the prospects and problematics of a truly "postcolonial" African state. The man who came to be called "the apostle of violence," "the prophet of a violent Third World revolution," "the prisoner of hate," and "the preacher of the gospel of the wretched of the earth," died of leukemia on December 6, 1961, at the unforgivably young age of thirty-six (E. Hansen, 1977, p. 52; Macey, 2000, p. 2; see also Arendt, 1970; Memmi, 1971, 1973). Macey (2000), perhaps, captured the ever-evolving posthumous life of Frantz Fanon best when he wrote at the dawn of the twenty-first century, "Over forty years after his death, Fanon remains a surprisingly enigmatic and elusive figure. Whether he should be regarded as 'Martiniquan,' 'Algerian,' 'French,' or simply 'Black' is not a question that can be decided easily. It is also a long-standing question" (p. 7).<sup>19</sup>

Undoubtedly, Fanon has profoundly influenced twentieth- and, already, twenty-first-century thinking about racism and colonialism, and whether his readers understand him to have been Caribbean, African, or French—or some synthesis of each of the foresaid—it is extremely important to emphasize that he desired, above all else, to be regarded quite simply as *human*, as a brother in the house of hardworking, humble humanity, and, perhaps most especially, a soldier on the side of the wretched of the earth. However, as the Ethiopian political philosopher Teodros Kiros (2004) readily reminds us, “[w]e are the children of geography and history, born to a given race, a given region, at a particular time, in a particular place” (p. 217). Fanon, no matter how radically humanist, was not during his lifetime, and certainly is not now, immune to these inescapable facts—the facts, as he himself said, of his blackness. “An accomplished writer,” Kiros contends, “Frantz Fanon is regarded by many as one of the greatest revolutionary thinkers of the twentieth century” (p. 217). He holds a special place in the hearts and minds of black radicals, revolutionary nationalists, and Pan-Africanists because, Kiros continues: “He was a Pan-Africanist who did not divide Africa into north and south, and he made it his mission always to remind the Algerians of their Africanity, and other Africans of the Africanity of the north of the continent. His activities and writings were always guided by a Pan-African lodestar” (p. 216).

Fanon (1968), then, was not simply against the colonization of African people and the African continent, but he was also against the colonization of Africana thought, what he termed in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the “racialization of thought” (p. 212). Throughout the following studies of the five major forms of Fanonism—yes, in fact, there are more than five forms of Fanonism—I examine what I understand to be Fanon’s major contributions to Africana studies, radical politics and critical social theory in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. Several of Fanon’s seminal conceptual contributions were included in the litany above where I observed that many of his most famous, if not “infamous,” critical theories are more relevant now than they were during his lifetime, and detailed the wide range of issues his four books astonishingly address. However, I should emphasize at the outset, because his work has been engaged and appropriated by scholars and activists-intellectuals of disparate disciplinary and radical political perspectives, Fanon’s dialectical discourse on revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary humanism will be employed as the primary point of departure and *leitmotif* here in an effort to make his contributions to Africana studies, radical politics and critical social theory accessible to as broad an audience, academic and otherwise, as possible. Because the following studies of the five major forms of Fanonism intentionally challenge conventional critiques and interpretations (or, rather,

misinterpretations) of Fanon, the succeeding “form summations,” as opposed to “chapter summaries,” will be important in terms of setting the tone and timbre for the remainder of the text.

### FORAYS INTO OR, RATHER, AGAINST THE FORLORNNESS OF FANON STUDIES: THEORETICAL THICKETS, EPISTEMIC TOPOGRAPHIES, AND FORM SUMMATIONS

In lieu of “chapters” I have chosen, rather appropriately I believe, to offer, literally, “forms” of Fanonism. Opting for “forms” over “chapters” speaks to the special efforts and intellectual labor-filled lengths I have gone through to really and truly make a contribution to Fanon studies. To conceptually focus on the “forms” of Fanonism, as opposed to taking a more book-based approach (i.e., a critical exploration of *Black Skin, White Masks* in one chapter or, of course, *The Wretched of the Earth* in another), also enables me to illustrate the incredible depth and wide reach of Fanon’s *transdisciplinary human science* contributions to Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory in a way that complements Fanon’s immanently more thematic and critical theoretical engagements of cultural crises and socio-political problems.

This, however, does not mean that in each and every instance I will completely abandon the book-based approach to Fanon if it proves to be the best way to critically explore a specific “form” of Fanonism. For example, in order to get to the meat of the matter with regard to Fanon’s contributions to critical race theory I will disproportionately focus on his psychosociopolitical existential phenomenology of race developed in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where to hit at the heart of his contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation I lean more heavily on his analysis of the *hijab* and the *burka* (or, if I must, “the veil”) in *A Dying Colonialism*. In no instance, though, do I isolate and examine a “form” of Fanonism as if it is not connected to another “form” of Fanonism or, to put it differently, in no instance do I engage a book by Fanon without conceptually placing it within his evolving insurgent intellectual and radical political trajectory and the wider world of ideas (and actions). In other words, by employing the Africana critical theoretical framework expatiated above, I seek to develop deeply sensitive interpretations and compassionately constructive criticisms of Fanon’s corpus that simultaneously and dialectically identifies and analyzes what is *useless* and what is *useful*, what is *retrogressive* and what is *progressive* in light of the wretched of the earth’s ongoing quests for human liberation and democratic social(ist) transformation in the twenty-first century. As was also mentioned above, *Forms of Fanonism*, then, is nothing other than an *archaeology of Africana knowledge* preoccupied with providing



an accessible inventory of what Fanon has historically and currently continues to contribute to Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory.

The first form of Fanonism, "Antiracist Fanonism," offers an analysis of *Black Skin, White Masks* which engages selected passages from the text that lend themselves to the deepening and development of a critical theory of "the lived-experience of the black" in the antiblack racist and white supremacist world of the twenty-first century. Emphasis, of course, will be placed on Fanon's psycho-sociopolitical existential phenomenology of race, his unique critique(s) of racism, and his contributions to contemporary critical race theory. In particular, critical attention will be given to Fanon's critiques of the Manichaeism of blackness and whiteness within an antiblack racist and white supremacist world with the intent of emphasizing the continued relevance of his transdisciplinary human scientific methods and modes of interpretation for contemporary antiracist radical politics and revolutionary social movements. "Antiracist Fanonism" also offers an innovative exploration of Fanon's contributions to critical race theory by bringing his incendiary ideas into deep discursive dialogue with the antiracist writings of James Baldwin, bell hooks and, to a lesser extent, Audre Lorde. This form of Fanonism will conclude with a discussion of Fanon's critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's (re)articulation of Negritude and earnestly examine the problematics involved when whites, however well-meaning and well-intentioned, attempt to theorize "the lived-experience of the black" without incessantly and unflinchingly self-reflexively and sincerely critiquing and combating their internalization of antiblack racism and often unwitting complicity in and private practice(s) of white supremacy.

Critically challenging the traditional interpretations of Fanon's theories of colonialism, violence, and decolonization, the second form of Fanonism, "Decolonialist Fanonism," revolves around an intense expatiation of his conceptions of racial colonialism, views on revolutionary violence, and discourse on revolutionary decolonization. Beginning with an exposition of the ways in which Fanon's ideas converge and diverge with Aimé Césaire's revolutionary Negritude, the study gives way to critical discussions of how the combination of racialization and colonization created a new form of colonialism (i.e., *racial colonialism*), perhaps, unprecedented in the annals of human history. From there it focuses on what Fanon offered as the "solution" to the "colonial problem" and the distinction he made between "true" and "false" decolonization before concluding with an informed analysis of how racial colonial violence, in some senses, summons the anticolonial violence of revolutionary decolonization.

The third form of Fanonism, "Marxist Fanonism," offers a reconsideration of Fanon's critiques of capitalism and contributions to Marxism. It is innovative in that it brings the dialectic to bear on both capitalism *and*

Marxism showing, on the one hand, that capitalism blocks the masses from developing to their fullest potential and condemns them to endure lives of exploitation and alienation, while the minority (i.e., the bourgeoisie) who own and control the means and modes of production enjoy lives of luxury and leisure at the hard-working majority's excruciating expense. On the other hand, "Marxist Fanonism" goes far to demonstrate that where Marx wrote of "the laboring proletariat," Fanon wrote of "the wretched of the earth." The "laboring proletariat," if you will, that Fanon wrote about and revolutionized on behalf of was not only exploited and alienated by capitalism, but they also were made wretched and endured the violence and vampirism of the racial colonialism identified and analyzed in "Decolonialist Fanonism." Fanon, it will be contended, indeed did employ Marxism in his quest(s) to critique capitalism. However, when and where he came to the critique of racism and colonialism or, rather, "racial colonialism," which was almost everywhere in the life-worlds and life-struggles of his much-revered wretched of the earth, Marxism frequently proved to provide very little. It is here that it will be advanced that Fanon and his discourse on revolutionary decolonization most distinguishes itself and makes its major contributions of innovative anticolonialist, antiracist, and anticapitalist concepts and categories to Marxism, Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory.

The fourth form of Fanonism, "Feminist Fanonism," critically examines Fanon's contradictory, controversial, and regularly contested relationship with feminism, womanism, and women's studies. It astutely engages the growing body of criticism on Fanon's "feminism" and demonstrates that it would be extremely difficult to deny his contributions—again, however contradictory, controversial, and contested—to women's quest(s) to decolonize their distinct life-worlds and life-struggles in the male supremacist world in which they find themselves (or, have been *flung* into!). Fanon's commitment to women's liberation will be shown to be deeply connected to, and, even more, inextricable from his commitments to antiracism, revolutionary decolonization, democratic socialism, and human liberation, and, as with each of the aforementioned, his theory of women's liberation has progressive and retrogressive aspects. "Feminist Fanonism" highlights the long-standing knee-jerk tendency among theorists, both male and female, who engage Fanon's contributions to feminism, womanism, and women's liberation and argue *either* that Fanon was gender progressive *or* that Fanon was gender regressive. It openly acknowledges, in all intellectual honesty, that Fanon was *both*: that is, in his texts he seems to be schizophrenically, at times, a staunch advocate for women's rights and women's liberation, and, at other times, completely oblivious of his "Freudian slips" and blind-spots with regard to gender justice and the ways in which his work—that is, his own words—speak to, not the *decolonization* of women's life-worlds

and lived-experiences, but the *recolonization* of women's life-worlds and life-struggles.

The fifth and final form of Fanonism engaged here, "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism," offers a climatic conclusion that brings each of the previously discussed and dissected forms of Fanonism together by highlighting the revolutionary humanist leitmotif that sometimes subtly and at other times silently runs throughout them, although always and ever concretely connecting them to his overarching objective of revolutionary decolonization. "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism" painstakingly points to *what* Fanon's "revolutionary humanism" is and *why* it remains relevant for those of us who are deeply concerned about, and deeply committed to the dialectical deconstruction and reconstruction of contemporary radical politics and critical social theory. "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism" begins with a lucid explication of the terms "revolutionary" and "humanism." Secondly, it undertakes an examination of how Fanon's humanism deviates from "conventional" (read: racial, colonial, patriarchal, capitalist) conceptions of humanism. Then, finally, it develops a discourse on the ways in which Fanon's revolutionary humanism is inextricable from his various critical theories of revolutionary decolonization, which each intensely accents the antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist dimensions of decolonization. Redefined and revised conceptions of "decolonization" and "humanism" and, even more, the Africana tradition of critical theory, I end the book bellowing, provide an almost ideal source of and site for the reconstruction of, not simply Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory but, even more importantly, contemporary humanity, society, civilization, and culture in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. Let us now begin our foray into or, rather, *against* the forlornness of Fanon studies by taking an in-depth look at Fanon's key contributions to philosophy of race, sociology of race, and critical race theory.

## NOTES

1. At the outset, then, I should openly acknowledge that this study or, rather, series of studies represents a continuation of the critical dialogue I initiated with Fanon in my aforementioned book, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition, from W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral* (2009), which was essentially a critical examination of the theories and praxes of half a dozen carefully chosen major Africana intellectual-activists ancestors. In *Africana Critical Theory* I endeavored to (re)introduce, chronicle, and analyze several of the significant features of the Africana tradition of critical theory. Beginning with W. E. B. Du Bois's radical, and later revolutionary, theory and praxis, and then time-traveling and globe-trotting from C. L. R. James to Negritude to Frantz Fanon and, finally, concluding with Amilcar Cabral, that volume chronicled

and critiqued, revisited and revised the black radical tradition with an eye toward the ways in which classical black radicalism informs, or *should* inform, not only contemporary black radicalism but contemporary efforts to create a new *antiracist, antisexist, anticapitalist, anticolonialist, and sexual orientation-sensitive critical theory of contemporary society*, what I have come to call *Africana critical theory*. However, here it is equally important to highlight that *Africana Critical Theory* was the intellectual archaeological aftermath of long, hard, and even, at times, harsh years and years of Du Bois, radical political, and critical theoretical studies, which ultimately yielded *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century* (2007) and *Du Bois's Dialectics: Black Radical Politics and the Reconstruction of Critical Social Theory* (2008). In other words, for more than a decade my primary intellectual preoccupation has been to widen the world of ideas of critical theory. Although critical theory has long been associated with the Frankfurt School, and specifically the intellectual lives and legacies of Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Jurgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse, I have audaciously endeavored to identify and critically explore the contributions of several other significant critical social theorists, and specifically the insurgent intellectual lives and radical political legacies of black radicals and revolutionaries. For instance, my first book, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century*, explored Du Bois and Africana studies' contributions to critical theory. It endeavored to innovatively demonstrate the ways in which Du Bois's *transdisciplinary* discourse contributes to the deconstruction and reconstruction of the intellectual history and history of ideas of "conventional" or "classical" critical theory, by bringing "classical" critical theory into deep discursive dialogue with Du Bois's distinct contributions to: philosophy of race, sociology of race, psychology of race, anthropology of race, history of race, and critical race theory; Pan-Africanism, anticolonialism, decolonization theory, and critical postcolonial theory; black Marxism, black nationalism, and other brands of black radicalism; and, black feminism, womanism, and the Black Women's Club Movement (specifically the National Association of Colored Women and, later, the National Council of Negro Women). My second book, *Du Bois's Dialectics: Black Radical Politics and the Reconstruction of Critical Social Theory*, shifted the focus from extending and expanding the intellectual and political discourse(s) of "classical" critical theory, by accenting and analyzing Du Bois and Africana studies' often-overlooked contributions, to broadening the base of contemporary or "new" critical theory, by bringing it into dialogue with Du Bois and Africana studies discourse. In both of these books, therefore, Du Bois's seminal work as a *transdisciplinary* critical social theorist and radical political activist was shown to be of immense importance to contemporary critical theorists interested in intellectually overhauling the foundations of critical theory, making it more multicultural, transethnic, transgender, transgenerational, sexual orientation-sensitive, and non-Western European philosophy-focused by placing it into deep dialogue with theory and phenomena it has heretofore woefully neglected. As the urgent issues of racism, sexism, capitalism, and colonialism were scrutinized in *Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century*, boldly blurring and unmistakably moving the critical theoretical margins even further, *Du Bois's Dialectics* endeavored ideological critiques of education, religion, the politics of reparations, and the problematics of black radical politics in contemporary culture and society. Similar to *Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century*, *Du Bois's*

*Dialectics* employed Du Bois as its critical theoretical point of departure and primary paradigmatic intellectual-activist ancestor, decidedly demonstrating his (and Africana studies') contributions to, as well as contemporary critical theory's connections to: philosophy of education, sociology of education, critical pedagogy, and critical educational theory; philosophy of religion, sociology of religion, liberation theology, and womanist theology; reparations theory and revolutionary humanism; and, it ingeniously offered the first critical theoretical treatment of the infamous W. E. B. Du Bois–Booker T. Washington debate, which lucidly highlights Du Bois's transition from a bourgeois black liberal touting a "Talented Tenth," to a bona fide black radical and revolutionary democratic socialist advocating a "Guiding Hundredth." It, therefore, is not in any way an overstatement to say that *Forms of Fanonism* is part of an ongoing conversation on the Africana tradition of critical theory that I have been intensely involved in for quite a while and intend to continue for the foreseeable future. Here, then, what I endeavor to do is shift the critical dialogue and discourse from Du Bois as the primary critical theoretical point of departure and paradigmatic intellectual-activist ancestor to Fanon as paradigm and point of departure. As will be witnessed in the studies (or "forms") to follow, Fanon's corpus ingeniously points to problems and provides solutions that simultaneously help to (re)establish and continue to extend and expand the Africana tradition of critical theory.

2. Habermas (1984, 1987a), as is well known, asserts the "colonization of the life-world" within capitalist societies in his much-touted magnum opus, *Theory of Communicative Action*. However, because of the staggering scope of Habermas's critical theory of contemporary society several of his other works should also be consulted, as they are in many senses inextricable from, and necessary for an informed understanding of his distinct discourse. Hence, see also Habermas (1975, 1979, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1987b, 1989a, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2000).

3. Here I would be remiss not to refer my readers to Peter Tosh's excellent boxed set, *Honorary Citizen: Poet, Philosopher, Preacher, Prophet* (1997), where there is provided a dictionary of sorts entitled "Words of the Herbalist Verbalist" in which many of Tosh's more colorful terms, such as "downpressor," are defined for the uninitiated (p. 55). Clearly, by "downpressor," Tosh meant *one who oppresses and pushes the poor down to the lowest social, political and economic level* (see also Campbell, 1992). With regard to Michel Foucault I am, of course, referring here to his watershed work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979).

4. Clearly my conception of human science (or, the human sciences) here builds on and seeks to go beyond: Altmann and Koch (1998), W. Bell (2003, 2004), Bradley and Schaefer (1998), R. H. Brown (1989), Dilthey (1962, 1976, 1985, 1989, 1996, 2002), Fox, Porter, and Wokler (1995), Husserl (1970, 1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1995, 1999), Kogler and Stueber (1999), Mahajan (1998), McLennan (2006), McLoughlin (1991), Miedema, Biesta, Boog, Wardekker, and Levering (1995), Polkinghorne (1983), Ricoeur (1965, 1978, 1980), Schrag (1980), Schrag and Tymieniecka (1983), R. Smith (1997), and C. M. Taylor (1985a, 1985b, 1989, 1995) to consciously include the wretched of the earth's (especially, classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African) contributions to the human sciences. I would be remiss not to also acknowledge my enormous debt to the work of Alfred Schutz (1962, 1964, 1966, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1978, 1982, 1989), whose unique emphasis on the importance of epistemological issues at the heart of the

social sciences has enabled me to deconstruct and reconstruct and, in a sense, *synthesize* the human sciences and Africana studies, and ultimately assert that Africana studies has matured to the point where it needs to be conceived of as nothing other than a *transdisciplinary human science*. To continue to speak or write of Africana studies as a "discipline" or, as I have in my previous works, as an "interdisciplinary" or "transdisciplinary" *discipline*, simply does not do justice to the new kinds and innovative combinations of knowledge that are more and more frequently emerging from its various fields and subfields of critical inquiry. As quiet as it has been kept, this knowledge, this new Africana knowledge, is increasingly having a greater and greater impact, not only on the European and European American academies but, even more, on continental and diasporan African life-worlds and life-struggles. Here I should, in addition, acknowledge the works within Africana studies which have, perhaps, more than any of the aforementioned, lead me to this line of logic: Bates, Mudimbe, and O'Barr (1993), P. H. Collins (1986b, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006), Gordon (1995b, 2000c, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006f, 2007a), Martin and West (1999), and Mudimbe (1983, 1985, 1988, 1994). The influence of the later texts on my thought here simply cannot be overstated.

5. I advance this book, then, as a continuation of the Africana Critical Theory (ACT) intellectual archaeology project, which was initiated with my doctoral dissertation, "Africana Critical Theory: From W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James's Discourse on Domination and Liberation to Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral's Dialectics of Decolonization" (2001). *Forms of Fanonism* builds on and goes beyond my previous works—*Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century*, *Du Bois's Dialectics*, and *Africana Critical Theory*—insofar as here I endeavor to make an offering toward the resuscitation and reconstruction of contemporary critical theory, what has been referred to elsewhere as "new critical theory," which seeks to bring critical class theory (mostly Marxism and/or neo-Marxism) into discursive dialogue with critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, postmodern theory, postcolonial theory, and postnational theory, among others. Several works, which fall under the rubric of what is currently being called "new critical theory," are already taking up the challenge of making critical theory speak to more than merely European, European American, patriarchal, and heterosexual crises, cultures, and sociopolitical problems. These works lucidly demonstrate that there are many forms and many traditions of critical theory. For further discussion, see Agger (1992a, 1993), Arisaka (2001), P. H. Collins (1998, 2000, 2005, 2006), Cornell (2008), Essed and Goldberg (2002), N. Fraser (1989, 1997), Hames-Garcia (2001), L. Harris (1999), Huntington (2001), Jafri (2004), Malpas and Wake (2006), Mendieta (2007), C. W. Mills (2003a), Outlaw (2005), Pulitano (2003), L. C. Simpson (2003), Willet (2001), and Wilkerson and Paris (2001). *Africana critical theory*, as an ongoing intellectual archaeology project, has, as mentioned above, previously deeply dialogued with Du Bois's contributions to the deconstruction and reconstruction of critical theory, but in this instance I endeavor to take an audacious turn toward Fanon's often-overlooked and/or frequently forgotten contributions to Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory in my efforts to advance the aforementioned (i.e., Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory) in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth of the twenty-first century. Therefore, calmly and coolly, it need be noted at the outset and in agreement with the British

political theorist, David Held (1980), "[c]ritical theory, it should be emphasized, does *not* form a unity; it does not mean the same thing to all its adherents" (p. 14, emphasis in original). For instance, Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (1991) employ the term "critical theory" in a general sense in their critique of postmodern theory, stating: "We are using 'critical theory' here in the general sense of critical social and cultural theory and not in the specific sense that refers to the critical theory of society developed by the Frankfurt School" (p. 33). Further, Raymond Morrow (1994) has forwarded that the term *critical theory* "has its origins in the work of a group of German scholars [of Jewish descent] (collectively referred to as the *Frankfurt School*) in the 1920s who used the term initially (*Kritische Theorie* in German) to designate a specific approach to interpreting Marxist theory. But the term has taken on new meanings in the interim and can be neither exclusively identified with the Marxist tradition from which it has become increasingly distinct nor reserved exclusively to the Frankfurt School, given extensive new variations outside the original German context" (p. 6). Finally, in his study of Marx's, Foucault's, and Habermas's philosophies of history and contributions to critical theory, Steven Best (1995) uses the term *critical theory* "in the most general sense, designating simply a critical social theory, that is, a social theory critical of present forms of domination, injustice, coercion, and inequality" (p. xvii). He, therefore, does not "limit the term to refer to only the Frankfurt School" (p. xvii). This means, then, that the term "critical theory" and the methods, presuppositions, and positions it has come to be associated with in the social sciences and humanities: (1) connotes and continues to exhibit an *epistemic openness* and style of radical cultural criticism that highlights and accents the historical alternatives and emancipatory possibilities of a specific age and/or sociocultural condition; (2) is not the exclusive domain of Marxists, neo-Marxists, post-Marxists, feminists, postfeminists, poststructuralists, postmodernists, and/or Habermasians; and, (3) can be radically reinterpreted and redefined to identify and include *classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African radical/revolutionary praxis-promoting social theory*. For a few of the more noteworthy histories of the Frankfurt School and their philosophical projects and various sociopolitical programs which have been informative here, please see Bernstein (1995); Bottomore (1984, 2002); Bubner (1988); Connerton (1980); Dews (1987); Dubiel (1985); Freundlieb, Hudson, and Rundell (2004); Friedman (1981); Geuss (1981); Held (1980); Ingram (1990); Jameson (1971); Jay (1984a, 1984b, 1996); Kellner (1989); Kohlenbach and Geuss (2005); Marcus and Tar (1984); Th. McCarthy (1991); Th. McCarthy and Hoy (1994); Morrow (1994); Nealon and Irr (2002); O'Neill (1976); Pensky (2005); D. Rasmussen (1996); Rasmussen and Swindal (2002, 2004); Slater (1977); Stirr (2000); Therborn (1996); J. B. Thompson (1990); Wellmer (1974); Wiggerhaus (1995); and Wolin (1992, 1994, 1995, 2006). And, for further discussion of the Africana tradition of critical theory, see Rabaka (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2004, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009, 2010, forthcoming).

6. The literature on Africana studies, which in its most comprehensive sense includes African, African American, Afro-American, Afro-Asian, Afro-European, Afro-Latino (a.k.a. Latino Negro), Afro-Native American, Caribbean, Pan-African, Black British and, of course, Black studies, is diverse and extensive. The most noteworthy overviews and critical analyses are: Aldridge and James (2007); Aldridge and

Young (2000); T. Anderson (1990); Anderson and Stewart (2007); Asante (1990, 1993, 1998, 2003a, 2007a); Asante and Abarry (1996); Asante and Asante (1985); Asante and Karenga (2006); Asante and Vandt (1980); Azevedo (2005); Baker, Diawara, and Lindeborg (1996); Ba Nikongo (1997); Barrett and Carey (2003); Bates, Mudimbe, and O'Barr (1993); Blassingame (1973); Bobo and Michel (2000); Bobo, Hudley, and Michel (2004); Conyers (2003, 2005); Cortada (1974); Croutchett (1971); Davies, Gadsby, Peterson, and Williams (2003); Fierce (1991); Ford (1973); Fossett and Tucker (1997); Frye (1978); Geggus (2002); Gordon and Gordon (2006a, 2006b); P. A. Hall (1999); Harris, Hine, and McKay (1990); Hayes (2000); Hudson-Weems (2004, 2007); Johnson and Henderson (2005); Johnson and Lyne (2002); Karenga (1988, 2001, 2002); R. D. G. Kelley (1997); Kopano and Williams (2004); Marable (2000, 2005); Mazrui, Okpewho, and Davies (1999); Mercer (1994); Mullen and Ho (2008); Norment (2007a, 2007b); Robinson, Foster, and Ogilvie (1969); Rojas (2007); Rooks (2006); J. B. Stewart (2004); J. Turner (1984); S. Walton (1969); and Whitten and Torres (1998).

7. Along with Africana studies and more general critical social scientific research methods, Africana critical theory has also been deeply influenced by the monumental meta-methodological studies of Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi (2008), Gunaratnam (2003), Sandoval (2000), and L. T. Smith (1999), which each seek to decolonize research methods and emphasize their importance in developing critical theories of white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist societies. The influence of these works on Africana critical theory's methodological orientation cannot be overstated.

8. I should reiterate here a point that I painstakingly made in both *Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century* and *Du Bois's Dialectics*, and it has to do with many Eurocentric critical theorists' efforts to continue the *epistemic colonization* of and *epistemic apartheid* within the world of critical theory. Again, I sincerely say with all due respect, the Frankfurt School tradition is neither the paradigm nor the point of departure for the Africana tradition of critical theory, but instead, as will be witnessed throughout the succeeding sections of this introduction, that honor belongs to several black radical and revolutionary intellectual-activist ancestors—and, none more than Du Bois. In point of fact, W. E. B. Du Bois, who provides the Africana tradition of critical theory with its primary paradigm and preeminent point of departure, graduated from Harvard University with a Ph.D. in history in 1895, the very same year that the oldest member of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, Max Horkheimer, was born. Prior to graduating with a Ph.D. from Harvard, Du Bois, as is well-known, earned a bachelor's degree from Fisk University, where he studied German, Greek, Latin, classical literature, philosophy, ethics, chemistry, and physics; received a second bachelor's degree, cum laude, in philosophy, and a master's degree in history, both from Harvard; and, completed his doctoral studies, studying history, economics, politics, and political economy, at Friedrich Wilhelm University, now the University of Berlin, in Germany. Therefore, he literally was *developing* and *doing* authentic *transdisciplinary critical social theory* either before the Frankfurt School critical theorists were born or, at the least, when they were toddlers. One need look no further, for instance, than his early, critical politico-sociological works, which helped to inaugurate American sociology and, especially, sociology of race, and his early transdisciplinary "social" and "community" studies of black life and culture



with which he, of course, initiated Africana studies: *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870*, “The Conservation of Races,” “Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes,” *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, *The Atlanta University Publications* under his editorship, *The Souls of Black Folk*, “The Talented Tenth,” and his early “social” and “community” studies posthumously published in *W. E. B. Du Bois on Sociology and the Black Community* (1978) and *The Social Theory of W. E. B. Du Bois* (2004), among others.

9. In his introduction to *One-Dimensional Man*, the Frankfurt School critical theorist Herbert Marcuse (1964) argues that “[s]ocial theory is concerned with the historical alternatives which haunt the established society as subversive tendencies and forces” (xliii–xliv). Part of the task of a critical theory of contemporary society, then, lies in its ability to critique society “in light of its used and unused or abused capabilities for improving the human condition” (xlii). When I write of “ethical,” “historical,” and/or “radical” alternatives here, I am advocating new modes of human existence and human interaction predicated on practices rooted in the realities of our past, present, and humbly hoped for future. I am following in the footsteps of one of the great impresarios of the Black Arts movement, Larry Neal (1989), who taught us that one of the most urgent tasks of radical artists and intellectual-activists is to offer “visions of a liberated future.” In offering *ethical alternatives* to the established order, critical theorists highlight and accent right and wrong thought and action, perhaps the single most important issue in the field of moral philosophy (Frey and Wellman, 2003; LaFollette, 1999, 2003; Singer, 1993; Sterba, 1998). The critique of racism, sexism, and colonialism register or, rather, *should* register right alongside the critique of capitalism in critical theorists’ conceptual universe(s), because part of the established order’s insidious ideology and, in particular, part of its political and economic ideological-agenda, involves domination and discrimination based on race, gender, and capitalist and/or colonialist class/caste. Antiracist, antisexist, and anticolonialist thought, practices, and social movements help to provide *historical alternatives* that Marx and Marxists’ criticisms of capitalism, to date, have not been able to adequately translate into reality (Aronson, 1995; Best, 1995; Callari, Cullenberg, and Biewener, 1995; Gottlieb, 1992; Magnus and Cullenberg, 1995; C. Nelson and Grossberg, 1988; C. J. Robinson, 2000, 2001). In fact, many former and neo-Marxists openly acknowledge that “classical” Marxism privileged class and gave special priority to economic issues that enabled it to easily overlook and/or omit the multiple issues arising from the socio-historical realities of racism, sexism, and colonialism in modern history, culture, politics, and society (Agger, 1992b, 1998; J. Cohen, 1987; A. Y. Davis, 1981, 1989, 1998b; Di Stephano, 1991, 2008; Dussel, 1985, 1995, 1996; Ingram, 1990; Kellner, 1989, 1995; Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Marsh, 1995, 1999, 2001; Matustik, 1998; C. W. Mills, 1987, 1997, 1998, 2003a; C. Nelson and Grossberg, 1988; Sargent, 1981; Vogel, 1983, 1995; Weinbaum, 1978; West, 1988, 1993). What I am calling for here, though, is not a neglect of class and the role that capitalist political economy plays in contemporary culture and society, but rather the placing of critical class theory in dialogue and on equal theoretical terms with critical race theory, women’s liberation theory, and postcolonial theory, among other theories, in order to develop a broader-based, polyvocal, radical political praxis–promoting theory of contemporary society. The sites and sources of violence, exploitation, and oppression in contemporary culture and society are multiple and

do not emerge from the economy and the crises of capitalism alone. New critical theory must take into consideration the long-neglected or often-overlooked new and novel forces and forms of domination and discrimination. Africana critical theory is an effort aimed at chronicling classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African radicals and revolutionaries' contributions to a critical theory of contemporary society. For further discussion, see Rabaka (2007b, 2008a, 2009, 2010, forthcoming).

10. Part of Africana philosophy's current metaphilosophical character, in large part, has to do with both its critical and uncritical appropriation of several Western European philosophical concepts and categories. As more philosophers of African origin and descent receive transdisciplinary training in and/or critically dialogue with Africana studies theory and methodology, the basic notions and nature of Africana philosophy will undoubtedly change. Needless to say, Africana philosophy has an intellectual arena and engages issues that are often distinctly different from the phenomena that preoccupy and have long plagued Western European and European American philosophy. I am not criticizing the metaphilosophical motivations in the discourse of contemporary Africana philosophy as much as I am pleading with workers in the field to develop a "division of labor"—à la Du Bois's classic caveat(s) to continental and diasporan Africans in the face of white supremacy and the epistemic apartheid of the European and American academies (see Du Bois, 1973, 2002; Rabaka, 2003d, 2008a). A move should be made away from "philosophizing on Africana philosophy" (i.e., metaphilosophy), and more Africana philosophical attention should be directed toward the cultural crises and social and political problems of the present age. In order to do this, Africana philosophers will have to turn to the advances of Africana studies scholars working in history, cultural criticism, economics, politics, and social theory, among other areas. For a more detailed discussion of the nature and tasks of Africana philosophy, see Lucius Outlaw's groundbreaking, "Africana Philosophy" and "African, African American, Africana Philosophy" (Outlaw, 1996, 1997a). And, for prime examples of the preliminary studies that are most indicative of the evolution of my conception and articulation of Africana critical theory, please see my "Africana Critical Theory of Contemporary Society: Ruminations on Radical Politics, Social Theory, and Africana Philosophy" and "(Re)Introducing the Africana Tradition of Critical Theory: Posing Problems and Searching for Solutions" (Rabaka, 2009, pp. 1–36).

11. Africana critical theory is not alone in its critique of West's lack of faith in the conceptual generation capacities of black folk in particular, and the other wretched of the earth in general. Several scholars, many working within Africana studies, have advanced constructive criticisms of his work. See, for example, Cowan (2003), Gilyard (2008), C. S. Johnson (2003), Wood (2000), and Yancy (2001).

12. Here, and throughout the remainder of this section of the introduction, I draw heavily from the discourse on Africana hermeneutics or, rather, Africana philosophy of interpretation in an effort to emphasize the importance of culturally grounded inquiry and interpretation in Africana critical theory. As Okonda Okolo (1991) observed in his classic essay, "Tradition and Destiny: Horizons of an African Philosophical Hermeneutics," Africana hermeneutics, as with almost all hermeneutical endeavors, centers on the ideas of "Tradition" and "Destiny" and how successive generations interpret, explain, and embrace their historical, cultural and intellectual heritage(s). In his own words: "For our part, we want to test the

resources but also the limits of our hermeneutical models and practices, by examining the two notions that encompass our interpretative efforts in an unconquerable circle—the notions of Tradition and Destiny. These notions simultaneously define the object, the subject, the horizons, and the limits of interpretation. To interpret is always to close the circle of the subject and the object. We cannot, however, make this circle our own if we do not lay it out beyond the thought of the subject and the object, toward a thinking of our horizons and the limits of our interpretation defined by the reality of our traditions and the ideality of our destiny” (p. 202). Okolo, among other Africana hermeneuticists, highlights the abstruse issues that arise in interpretative theory and praxis in our present social world and world of ideas. Historical and cultural experiences and struggles determine and, often subtly, define *what* and *how* we interpret. If, for instance, Africana thought-traditions are not known to, and not shared with, theorists and philosophers of African descent and other interested scholars (i.e., Africanists), then they will assume there is no history of theory or philosophy in the African world (see L. Harris, 1983; Eze, 1997a; Gordon and Gordon 2006a, 2006b; Lott and Pittman, 2003; Wiredu, 2004). These would-be Africana theorists will draw from another cultural group’s schools of thought, because human existence, as the Africana philosophers of existence have pointed out, is nothing other than our constant confrontation with ontological issues and existential questions. What is more, the nature of theory, especially in the current postcolonial/postmodern period, is that it incessantly links with and builds on other theories. In other words, a competent theorist must not only be familiar with the history and evolutionary character of theory, but the intellectual origins of theories—that is, with *who*, *where*, and *why* specific theories were created to describe and explain and, even more, *alter* a particular subject and/or object. For further discussion of Africana hermeneutics, see Okere (1971, 1991), Outlaw (1974, 1983b, 1983c), and Serequeberhan (1991, 2000, 2007).

13. I give greater discussion to Africana critical theory’s appropriation of certain aspects of Foucault’s critical theories of power, knowledge, domination, and discourse in light of racism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and humanism in the concluding “form” of Fanonism, “Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism,” engaged in this study. However, it should be observed upfront that throughout this study (or, rather, series of studies) I shall endeavor to critically apply Foucault’s seemingly abstract ruminations on power, knowledge, domination, and discourse, and radically realize or, rather, concretize them in the forces and forms of modern/postmodern and neocolonial/postcolonial racism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and humanism in my efforts to deepen and develop Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth.

14. Most notably, my interpretation of dialectics has been influenced by C. L. R. James’s *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (1980a), Robert I. Allen’s *Dialectics of Black Power* (1968), Raya Dunayevskaya’s *Women’s Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future* (1996), Anouar Abdel-Malek’s *Social Dialectics* (1981), and John H. McClendon’s *C. L. R. James’s Notes on Dialectics: Left-Hegelianism or Marxist-Leninism?* (2005). Similar to critical social theory, it should be emphasized that dialectics is not the exclusive theoretical domain or intellectual terrain of Marxists or Marxist-Leninists, but a specific kind of critical thinking, open to all, that constantly compares, contrasts, and counters *what is* with *what could be* or *what ought*

to be. In this sense, each human culture and civilization arguably has its own unique version of dialectical thinking, and it is from this discourse that Africana critical theory deepens and develops its dialectical dimension (see Rabaka, 2008a). For further discussion of dialectics, in a general sense, see Albritton (1999), Albritton and Simoulidis (2003), Anived (2003), Bongmba (2006), D. Cooper (1968), De-Grood (1978), Erickson (1990), Fatton (1986), Kosik (1976), McClennen (2004), Moscovici (2002), Nuckolls (1996), T. J. Reiss (2002), Rescher (1977, 2006), T. M. Shaw (1985), Shusterman (2002), Solomon (1976), Vogeler and de Souza (1980) and Widmer (1988).

15. Cabral's influence on my conception of Africana critical theory simply cannot be overstated. Along with Du Bois and Fanon, Cabral has been a constant in my insurgent intellectual and radical political development, from graduate school through to the present/professoriate. In particular, I should observe three special ways in which Cabral connects with and contributes to the discourse of Africana critical theory. First, it should be mentioned that "[a]lthough he did not start out or train as a philosopher," Cabral, according to the Nigerian philosopher, Olufemi Taiwo (1999a), "bequeathed to us a body of writings containing his reflections on such issues as the nature and course of social transformation, human nature, history, violence, oppression and liberation" (p. 6). Second, and as eloquently argued by the Eritrean philosopher, Tsenay Serequeberhan (1991), Cabral's ideas led to action (i.e., actual cultural, historical, social, and political transformation, and ultimately revolutionary decolonization and liberation) and, therefore, "represents the zenith" of twentieth century Africana revolutionary theory and praxis (p. 20). Third, and finally, his writings and reflections provide us with a series of unique ruminations on and contributions to Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory, which rivals those of Du Bois and Fanon in that—similar to their dialectical thought, critical social theories, and revolutionary praxes—Cabral's work sincerely seeks to simultaneously critique racist capitalist *and* racial colonialist societies. For further discussion of Africana critical theory's contraction of Cabral's critical theory, please see *Africana Critical Theory*, especially chapter 6, "Amilcar Cabral: Using the Weapon of Theory to Return to the Source(s) of Revolutionary Decolonization and Revolutionary Re-Africanization" and my forthcoming book, *The Weapon of Theory: Amilcar Cabral's Contributions to Africana Critical Theory*.

16. Here and throughout this section in addition to Amilcar Cabral's critical theory, I am generously drawing from Antonio Gramsci's conceptual contributions: "ideological hegemony," "organic intellectual," "historical bloc," "war of position," "war of maneuver," "ensemble of ideas and social relations," and so on. His work has deeply influenced my conception of critical theory as a form of ideological and cultural critique, as well as a radical political praxis-promoting social theory. In particular, Gramsci's assertion that class domination is exercised as much through popular and unconscious consensus (or the internalization of imperialism) as through physical coercion (or the threat of it) by the state apparatus—especially in advanced capitalist societies where politics, education, religion, law, medicine, media, and popular culture, among other areas, are covetously controlled by the ruling class—his work innovatively emphasizes the counterideological and counterhegemonic dimension that contemporary radical politics and critical social theory must deepen and further develop. However, in terms of Africana critical theory of con-

temporary society and the life-worlds and life-struggles of people of African origin and descent, and the wretched of the earth in general, class domination and capitalism represent one of many overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting systems of domination and discrimination that must be ideologically and physically combated and discontinued. Therefore, Gramsci's work provides several insights, but must be synthesized with other theory, especially critical race theory, revolutionary feminist theory, womanist theory, postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy, and liberation theology, among others, if it is to aid in the (re)construction of a new, more multicultural, radical antiracist, gender justice-seeking, and sexuality-sensitive critical theory of contemporary society in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. For further discussion, see Gramsci (1967, 1971, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1985, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 2000).

17. My interpretation of black invisibility and anonymity has, of course, been deeply influenced by Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1980) and Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1990), but has been enhanced most by Lewis Gordon's *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism* (1995a), "Existential Dynamics of Theorizing Black Invisibility" (1997a, pp. 69–79), "Context: Ruminations on Violence and Anonymity" (1997b, pp. 13–24), and "Existential Borders of Anonymity and Superfluous Invisibility" (2000b, pp. 153–163). On the black collective mind and African communal thought theses, see Robin Horton's *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies* (1973) and his controversial sequel *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion, and Science* (1993), as well as Paulin Hountondji's *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (1996). And, for solid criticisms of these theses, see Kwasi Wiredu's *Philosophy and an African Culture* (1980) and Kwame Gyekye's *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought* (1995).

18. In "Kinship of the Dispossessed: Du Bois, Nkrumah, and the Foundations of Pan-Africanism" the Nigerian philosopher Segun Gbadegesin (1996) offers an important outline of the three major meanings of Pan-Africanism: first, "*Pan-Negroism*: an idea that Africans at home and abroad share a common destiny in virtue of being a common race. And 'race' here refers to either (a) physical traits or (b) socio-historical traits." Second, "*Pan-Humanism*: an idea that Pan-Africanism refers to the kinship of the dispossessed and the degraded and that this includes but goes beyond people of African descent." And, third and finally, "*Pan-Continentalism*: a view that Pan-Africanism is limited to the idea and movement of African unity and restricted to the continent of Africa in its struggle for emancipation against colonial exploitation" (pp. 225–226, emphasis added). If, indeed, we agree that Gbadegesin is on target with his expatiation of Pan-Africanism, then it is easy to see, not simply why Fanon can (and *should*) be considered a Pan-Africanist but, perhaps even more importantly, why his form of Pan-Africanism resonated with the Pan-African humanists and many Pan-African continentalists, but rubbed the race-centered Pan-Africanists the wrong way. This problematic points to his ultimate emphasis on revolutionary humanism, which, from his perspective, extended well beyond the wretched of the earth of African descent and/or on the African continent and included the wretched and reviled wherever they were and, sad to say, remain. Fanon regularly observed that many African leaders had come to accept the European imperial artificial separation of Africa into "Africa north of the Sahara" and "Africa south of the Sahara,"

and that this kind of thinking was indicative of Europe's simultaneous racialization and colonization of African's life-worlds and conceptions of their life-struggles. For Fanon, this was one of the ways in which Europe continued to psychopathologically *divide and conquer* Africa and Africans. Instead of xenophobically viewing North Africa as "full of foreigners," Fanon advocated a unique kind of *Pan-African humanist-continentalism* that not only saw North Africa as an integral part of Africa and its liberation struggle, but he dialectically challenged and chided Pan-African nationalist-continentalists for their inattention to the crises and struggles of the African diaspora. The African diaspora then, too, according to Fanon, was an integral part of Africa and its liberation struggle. When this avenue of argumentation is taken further, as it will be in the "forms" to follow, it becomes amazingly clear *why* and *how* Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization ultimately dovetails with his ruminations on revolutionary humanism and, even more, that he conceived of both encompassing the peoples and liberation struggles of the African diaspora as well. For further discussion, please see Fanon's frequently overlooked books *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) and *Toward the African Revolution* (1969), as well as Fanonism forms 1, 2, and 5 of the present volume.

19. Besides the biographical works cited in the text, Gendzier (1973) and Macey (2000), I have also relied on Alessandrini (1999), Bouvier (1971), Cauté (1970), Cherki (2006), J. Fanon (2004), Geismar (1969, 1971), N. C. Gibson (1999e, 2003), Gordon (1995b), Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White (1996), E. Hansen (1977), Jinadu (1986), and Zahar (1970, 1974) to reconstruct and reinterpret Fanon's personal history and radical political development.

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## Antiracist Fanonism

### Unmasking Blackness, Unmaking Whiteness: Fanon's Psycho-Sociopolitical Existential Phenomenology of Race and Contributions to Revolutionary Blackness and Critical Race Theory

The idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization (the present civilization, which is the only one that matters; all previous civilizations are simply "contributions" to our own) and are therefore civilization's guardians and defenders.

—James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (p. 172)

Theorizing black experience, we seek to uncover, restore, as well as to deconstruct, so that new paths, different journeys, are possible.

—bell hooks, *Killing Rage: Ending Racism* (p. 41)

Why write this book? No one has asked me for it. Especially those to whom it is directed. . . . Only a few of those who read this book will understand the problems that were encountered in its composition.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (pp. 7–8)

So begins Fanon's first book, *Black Skin, White Masks*. He sensed that his work would not be welcomed, by white or black readers, and yet he offered it because, he firmly believed, "there are too many idiots in the world" (Fanon, 1967, p. 7). *Black Skin, White Masks* is a genre-bending book about disalienation and decolonization. It is an intense exploration of "the lived-experience of the black" and "the various attitudes that the Negro adopts in contact with white civilization" (p. 12). Fanon embraced Jean-Paul Sartre's

concept of “committed literature” and wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* with a clear purpose: “I believe that the fact of the juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psychoexistential complex. I hope by analyzing it to destroy it.”<sup>1</sup> Further, he stated, with this book “I seriously hope to persuade my brother, whether black or white, to tear off with all his strength the shameful livery put together by centuries of incomprehension” (p. 12). *Black Skin, White Masks*, then, is ultimately a book about “the problems of love and understanding” (p. 8). It opens and closes by strongly stressing the revolutionary humanism that Fanon’s insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy would ultimately hinge on (see Onwuanibe, 1983).

Even though Fanon wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* with a clear purpose, his prose is often extremely difficult to read, especially for contemporary readers. The book constantly moves back and forth between medical terminology and poetry, between analysis of historical texts and novels—in other words, between facts and fiction. Then, there is Fanon’s habit of creating new words to express himself, neologisms, as well as his use of Martiniquan creolizations. Reading *Black Skin, White Masks* is further complicated, according to Fanon biographer David Macey (2000), because “it is so difficult to categorize in terms of genre. It is difficult to think of any precedent for it, and it did not establish any new genre or tradition. It had no sequel” (p. 161). Perhaps it is “difficult to think of any precedent” for *Black Skin, White Masks* in Francophone literature, but in Anglophone literature W. E. B. Du Bois’s 1920 classic *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* immediately comes to mind. Although Fanon does not cite *Darkwater* in *Black Skin, White Masks*, it is interesting to note some of the similarities between the texts.

In *Darkwater* (1999), Du Bois employs a mixture of literary mediums, creating a textual collage that would have (or, indeed, maybe) made the African American visual artist and collagist, Romare Bearden, grin from ear to ear. In a much more pronounced manner than in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois’s writing in *Darkwater* was poignant and polyvocal, shifting back and forth between pungent politico-economic analysis and sociocultural criticism, to pure poetry and lyrical literary experimentation (the latter, à la Jean Toomer’s 1923 classic *Cane*, though Du Bois’s creative writing had a firmer foundation in the former, social science, and was, therefore, often cerebral and overly sentimental [see L. N. Gibson, 1977; Gipson, 1971; Kostelanetz, 1985; Staton, 2001]). Where *The Souls of Black Folk* was a literary look backward at the impact and effects of the African holocaust, enslavement, and Jim Crow segregation on the human pride and humble passions of African Americans, *Darkwater* was a literary look forward, a “vision of the liberated future” that Larry Neal (1989) and his Black Arts associates were soon to sing of. It was an extremely innovative and thoroughly cosmopolitan text, perhaps one of the first and most widely



read to combine literary experimentation and sociological analysis with continental and diasporan African calls for racial justice. It was, amazingly for its time, simultaneously antiracist, antisexist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist, devoting at least one chapter to each of the aforementioned imperial issues and/or ideologies. It was, in the end, early Africana *guerilla wordfare*, to coin a phrase—that is, radical writing as a form of freedom fighting—in the sense that Du Bois employed every major modern style of writing to critique and combat the various types of domination and discrimination of his time and, sad to say, of ours as well (Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2010, forthcoming).

Although *Black Skin, White Masks* does not directly draw from *Darkwater* it is interesting to observe that both texts blur the lines between literary genres. What does this say about the respective authors' unique conceptions of "committed literature"? What are they revealing to us, their readers, about "the lived-experience of the black"? Perhaps they are saying that one literary genre simply cannot capture "the lived-experience of the black," or what they wanted to express about "the lived-experience of the black" in their respective times and texts. *Darkwater* and *Black Skin, White Masks* prefigure the intense interdisciplinary research methods and modes of analysis of Africana studies, which have consistently leveled critiques of monodisciplinary interpretations of the black experience and argued for multidisciplinary and, ultimately, interdisciplinary analyses of the black experience.<sup>2</sup> In discussing *Black Skin, White Masks*, Macey (2000) characterized the text as "an extended exercise in *bricolage*," which seems to capture its critical theoretic contours and also provide us with a unique way of critically engaging it:

The best way to approach *Peau noire, masques blancs* is to regard it as an extended exercise in *bricolage*, the term Levi-Strauss used to describe how myths are assembled from materials that are to hand: the word literally means "do it yourself." *Bricolage* is a good way of describing just what Fanon was doing as he plundered the libraries and bookshops of Lyon and then strode up and down, dictating his text to Josie [his wife]. The main materials to hand were the phenomenology of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, the cultural discourse or tradition of Negritude, the psychiatry in which Fanon had just trained, and the fragments of psychoanalytic theory he had absorbed from books. His relationship with his raw materials was never easy—the relationships with Negritude and psychoanalysis were particularly fraught—and their synthesis was far from being a smooth one. To describe *Peau noire* as the product of *bricolage* is not to disparage either Fanon or his book. The term quite simply describes what he was doing: using elements of a then modernist philosophy and psychoanalysis to explore and analyze his own situation and experience, even though he had no real academic training as a philosopher and no extensive knowledge of psychoanalysis. (pp. 162–163, all emphasis in original)

If we were to complement Levi-Strauss's more myth-focused conception of *bricolage* and expand it to include history, then Macey's characterization of *Black Skin, White Masks* would carry more weight within the world of critical theory. Without emphasizing the dialectic of myth *and* history, Macey's interpretation of *Black Skin, White Masks* may be misinterpreted as reducing it to mythmaking, one of the main reasons Fanon mercilessly criticized Senghor's version of Negritude. Of all the schools of thought Fanon relied on in researching and writing *Black Skin, White Masks*, he turned to Negritude, existential-phenomenology, and psychoanalysis the most. However, as Macey admits, "[n]either Negritude nor phenomenology provide an adequate description of Fanon's *Erlebnis* [lived-experience]. Nor does psychoanalysis" (p. 187). In fact, Fanon (1967) openly challenged white or, rather, Eurocentric psychoanalysis, stating: "There has been much talk of psychoanalysis in connection with the Negro. Disturbing the ways in which it might be applied, I have preferred to call this chapter 'The Negro and Psychopathology,' well aware that Freud and Adler and even the cosmic Jung did not think of the Negro in all their investigations. And they were quite right not to have" (p. 151).<sup>3</sup>

Freud, Adler, and Jung "were quite right not to have" considered blacks in their studies because, according to Fanon, when whites enter into ethnology, that is, studying nonwhites, they are so "imbued with the complexes of their own civilization that they are compelled to try to find them duplicated in the peoples they study" (p. 152). The core of his critique here revolved around the simple, but often overlooked, fact in the world of white psychology that "there is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white man to that of the black." He continued: "Like it or not, the Oedipus complex is far from coming into being among Negroes. . . . It would be relatively easy for me to show that in the French Antilles 97 per cent of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratulate ourselves" (pp. 151–152). This demonstrates that though Fanon did draw from psychoanalysis, he was well aware of its limitations for the critical exploration of "the lived-experience of the black" in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. However, he did not stop here. Fanon went further to call into question the Eurocentric nature of research methods in white psychology, asserting: "It is good form to introduce a work in psychology with a statement of its methodological point of view. I shall be derelict. I leave methods to the botanists and the mathematicians. There is a point at which methods devour themselves" (p. 12).<sup>4</sup>

In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon developed a dialectical relationship with psychoanalysis, existential phenomenology, and Negritude, among other theories, and in terms of the ways in which this work contributes to critical theory, and Africana critical theory in specific, what generates the most intellectual excitement are the moments of breathtaking brilliance

where he synthesizes aspects of the theories in the interest of analyzing “the lived-experience of the black” in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. The following analysis of *Black Skin, White Masks* will engage those selected passages of the text that lend themselves to the deepening and development of a critical theory of “the lived-experience of the black” in the antiblack racist and white supremacist world of the twenty-first century. Emphasis, of course, will be placed on Fanon’s psycho-sociopolitical existential phenomenology of race, his unique critique(s) of racism, and his contributions to contemporary critical race theory. In particular, critical attention will be given to Fanon’s critiques of blackness and whiteness with the intent of emphasizing the continued relevance of his method and model for contemporary antiracist radical politics and revolutionary social movements. In an effort to concretely demonstrate the contemporaneity of Fanon’s contributions to critical race theory, his incendiary antiracist ideas will be brought into deep discursive dialogue with the antiracist writings of James Baldwin, bell hooks and, to a lesser extent, Audre Lorde. This “form” (again, as opposed to “chapter”) will conclude with a discussion of Fanon’s critique of Jean-Paul Sartre’s articulation of Negritude and examine the problematics involved when whites attempt to theorize “the lived-experience of the black” without self-reflexively critiquing and combating their internalization of antiblack racism and complicity in and private practice(s) of white supremacy.

## TOWARD A CRITICAL THEORY OF THE LIVED-EXPERIENCE OF THE BLACK: DECONSTRUCTING AND RECONSTRUCTING THE DIALECTICS OF BLACKNESS AND WHITENESS

[H]e [the white] did not know the black, he made him.

—Jean-Paul Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics* (p. 546)

Fanon was created by the white man.

—David Caute, *Frantz Fanon* (p. 2)

The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness. . . . Concern with elimination of a vicious circle has been the only guide-line for my efforts. There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect. . . . White civilization and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro. I shall demonstrate elsewhere that what is often called the black soul is a white man’s artifact.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (pp. 9, 10, 14)

What does it mean to *live* blackness in an antiblack racist world? What does it mean to *experience* blackness in an antiblack racist world? What are the consequences of blacks' internalizing antiblack racism? Why do whites believe that when it comes to race they are miraculously raceless, or that whiteness is somehow "natural," "normal," and/or racially "neutral"? What are the consequences of whites denying that white supremacy still exists or, worse, that it ever existed? In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon offers acute answers to these, among many other, crucial questions. He importantly emphasizes that blackness is dialectically inextricable from whiteness, and also controversially claims that blackness—as most blacks *live* and *experience* it—is actually a creation of, and a reaction to, whiteness—white history and culture, and white "civilization" and racial colonial imagination. In the epigraph above he states, "what is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact." Elsewhere in *Black Skin, White Masks* he declares, "Willy-nilly, the Negro has to wear the livery that the white man has sewed for him" (p. 34). In exposing blacks to the fact that most of their lived-experiences have been and remain constructed (and deliberately destructed) by whites, Fanon sought to foster an antiracist and, ultimately, as we will see in the final "form" of Fanonism discussed in this volume, a revolutionary humanist critical consciousness among blacks (as well as whites and other nonwhites). However, first and foremost, he believed blacks had to come to terms with the white supremacist antiblack racist social construction of their blackness. He critically queried:

What does a man want? What does the black man want? At the risk of arousing the resentment of my colored brothers, I will say that the black is not a man. . . . The black is a black man; that is, as the result of a series of aberrations of affect, he is rooted at the core of a universe from which he must be extricated. . . . However painful it may be for me to accept this conclusion, I am obliged to state it: For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white. (pp. 8, 10)

The "universe" that blacks have found themselves flung into is an antiblack racist and white supremacist universe, which is to say it is not a world of their own creation and social construction. They "must be extricated" from this inhospitable universe because they are not and cannot truly *live*, in any sense of the word, free, proud, and productive *human* lives in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. All of their relations, even with themselves and other blacks, are—well, we could ironically say—"blackened," they are hyper-racially colonized and clouded by antiblack racism and white supremacy. There is a tendency to overlook antiblack racism when whites are not physically present, but *in a white supremacist world whites are ideologically omnipresent, even when they are physically absent*. Sartre (2001) said, "Blacks can meet only on that trap-

covered ground that the white has prepared for them: the colonist has arranged to be the eternal mediator between the colonized; he is there—always there—even when he is absent, even in the most secret meetings” (p. 121). The entire white supremacist world “stinks of racism” because its “myths of progress” are premised on the “myth of the Negro” and, as Fanon (1967) observed above, “the black soul is a white man’s artifact,” by which he meant, the “Negro” or the black that whites sometimes schizophrenically “love” *and* hate or, even worse, *love to hate*, is actually their own un-owned and unacknowledged antiblack racist creation or re-creation, a fantastic figment of their own white supremacist imaginations (pp. 151, 201, 194). We will soon see that even the great Jean-Paul Sartre, according to Fanon, internalized and practiced a weak form of white supremacy in his redefinition and retheorization of Negritude and “the lived-experience of the black.”

There is no modern concept of the “Negro,” the black or, even, the African that has not been, in some white supremacist way, socially constructed and provided by, or produced in reaction to, European and European American conceptions of the alleged inferiority of blackness and the supposed sanctity of whiteness. Fanon prods us to critically consider the matter: “Is not whiteness in symbols always ascribed in French [and in English, we could add] to Justice, Truth, Virginity? . . . The black man is the symbol of Evil and Ugliness. . . . *In Europe, the black man is the symbol of Evil*” (pp. 180, 188, emphasis in original). Notice Fanon’s shift of tone and timbre here. He goes from questioning to caustically contending white supremacist constructions of blackness. He is well aware that critically engaging the ways that whites have constructed blackness will be difficult and disconcerting for both his black and white readers. He offers this compassionate caveat: “One must move softly, and there is a whole drama in having to lay bare little by little the workings of processes that are seen in their totality. . . . One must move softly, I know, but it is not easy” (pp. 188–189). Even though “it is not easy,” Fanon continued his agonizing exploration of white supremacist antiblack racist constructions of blackness:

The torturer is the black man, Satan is black, one talks of shadows, when one is dirty one is black—whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness. It would be astonishing, if the trouble were taken to bring them all together, to see the vast number of expressions that make the black man the equivalent of sin. In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of the character. As long as one cannot understand this fact, one is doomed to talk in circles about the “black problem.” Blackness, darkness, shadow, shades, night, the labyrinths of the earth, abysmal depths, blacken someone’s reputation. . . . In Europe, that is to say, in every civilized

and civilizing country, the Negro is the symbol of sin. The archetype of the lowest values is represented by the Negro. (p. 189)

Here we come to the heart of the matter, the various reasons Fanon critically engaged blackness in the white imagination in such anguished depth and intimate detail in *Black Skin, White Masks*. First, he believed that if blacks were made aware of white supremacist constructions of blackness they could begin to consciously decolonize and deconstruct these false, antiblack racist constructions of blackness and reconstruct a new *revolutionary blackness*—that is, *a blackness that transgresses and transcends antiblack racism and white supremacy and, also, a blackness that promotes revolutionary humanism and solidarity with other racially colonized and struggling people, as well as authentic white antiracist allies*. Transgressing and transcending antiblack racism and white supremacy revolve around revolutionary humanism because at the heart of real humanism is an emphasis on *love*—and, though I know I need not say it, authentic love goes above and beyond race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation.

Indeed, it must be honestly admitted, when blacks become aware of, or are existentially confronted with white supremacy in the form of antiblack racism, initially they are often angry and morally outraged, which is completely understandable from a black existential phenomenological perspective (see Gordon, 1995a, 1996a, 1997a, 1997b, 1998b, 2000b, 2003). In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon recounts a story about the trauma he experienced when a white child shouted, “Look a Negro!” to his mother upon seeing him, Fanon, riding on a train. Initially, Fanon admits, he found it funny, writing “Look, a Negro! It was true. I was amused.” Then, the white child’s, however inchoate, internalization of antiblack racism reared its head, and he said, “Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” (p. 112). Fanon’s amusement was immediately annulled. The precious progeny of the white supremacist world, the white child’s fantastic fear put Fanon in his infernal “place.” The white child’s fear of the black demonstrates that there are few, if any, interactions and relationships, interracial or otherwise, in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world free from racial colonial contamination. The white child’s practice of *the antiblack racial gaze*, which translated into his fear of Fanon, speaks volumes about the violence that antiblack racism and white supremacy does to children’s consciences and, truth be told, their unconscious. The white child went from what was (mis)interpreted as a naïve observation about pigmentation, to a violent (at least for Fanon, the black) loss of racial innocence—that is, if such a thing (“racial innocence”) really and truly exists in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. The white child’s fear of the black colonized or, rather, recolonized Fanon, robbing him of his individuality, distinct personal history, human worth, human dignity, and right to an open-ended and self-determined destiny.

From the depths of his desperate double consciousness, which was sparked by the antiblack racial gaze of a white child in a white supremacist world, Fanon wrote:

My body was given to me sprawled out, distorted, re-colored, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up.

All round me the white man, above the sky tears at its navel, the earth rasps under my feet, and there is a white song, a white song. All this whiteness that burns me. (pp. 113–114; see also Gooding-Williams, 2005; Yancy, 2008)

Anger, indeed, but anger directed at the *absurdity* (to use existential phenomenological language) of white supremacy, which the child has presented himself, however unconsciously, as a proxy for. In fact, it is *black anger* at white supremacy. *Black anger* because it is the black's unique response to his or her particular and peculiar lived-experience of antiblack racism and white supremacy. Embarrassed or, perhaps, feeling the "white guilt" that Fanon discussed and dissected so articulately and intimately throughout *Black Skin, White Masks*, the white mother, instead of using this absurd situation as an antiracist and critical multicultural teachable moment, and as if trying to put a band-aid on a bullet wound like a "good" little white liberal racist, she responded by saying to her son, "Look how handsome that Negro is!" Her flattery only added insult to Fanon's agonizing injury. If she would not teach her son, then, Fanon would give both of them a little lesson in "the lived-experience of the black."

Then and there, breaking with everything he had learned about interracial etiquette in a white supremacist world, Fanon's anger reached its apex with half a dozen faithful words that most blacks mumble under their breaths or, at the least, out of earshot of whites, especially antiblack racist white children: "Kiss the handsome Negro's ass, madame!" He refused to be "the black" and all that that subhuman or nonhuman category represents to white supremacists. Fanon was determined to continue his process of disalienation and decolonization. Nothing would deter him, not even the supposedly racially neutral naïveté of a white child. His black anger at antiblack racism and white supremacy served as a counter to the white mother and the white child's white supremacist antiblack racist constructions of blackness. If the white mother would not utilize the situation as a teachable moment, then, Fanon, the black, would. He taught the white mother and child that they cannot say and do anything to

blacks, that blacks are not their imagined brutes and “beasts of burden,” but distinct human beings with emotions and intellects, with hearts and minds that whites will have to learn to be sensitive to, and that should they overlook blacks emotions and intellects, as well as blacks’ right to be humanly different from whites, they do so at their own peril. This, in essence, is what I have come to call “antiracist Fanonism.”

**“KISS THE HANDSOME NEGRO’S ASS, MADAME!”: WAGING  
WAR AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY WITH FRANTZ  
FANON AND JAMES BALDWIN**

During the same time period, those dark, dank days of the 1950s, when Fanon was theorizing the lived-experience of the black, primarily in the Francophone world, the acclaimed African American novelist and cultural critic, James Baldwin, who also had a special ragged, racialized relationship with France, and Europe in general, brutally broached the subject of black anger in his 1955 classic *Notes of a Native Son*. He made important and innovative connections between European antiblack racist beliefs and white American antiblack racist beliefs, all the while demonstrating that culturally America began and remains (often proudly) premised on violent European imperial expansionism. Baldwin (1955) boldly challenged the narrative of “how the West was won” and *whitened*, if you will:

The ideas on which American beliefs are based are not, though Americans often seem to think so, ideas which originated in America. They came out of Europe. And the establishment of democracy on the American continent was scarcely as radical a break with the past as was the necessity, which Americans faced, of broadening this concept to include black men. This was, literally, a hard necessity. It was impossible, for one thing, for Americans to abandon their beliefs, not only because these beliefs alone seemed able to justify the sacrifices they had endured and the blood that they had spilled, but also because these beliefs afforded them their only bulwark against a moral chaos as absolute as the physical chaos of the continent it was their destiny to conquer. But in the situation in which Americans found themselves, these beliefs threatened an idea which, whether or not one likes to think so, is the very warp and woof of the heritage of the West, the idea of white supremacy. (pp. 171–172)<sup>5</sup>

For Baldwin, white supremacy is at the heart of “the heritage of the West,” the motor inside the mercilessly violent machine, if you will. One of the many paradoxes of a white supremacist world is that it hides the concrete and historical fact that it *is* white supremacist from itself. In other words, it is a world premised on the most profound form of bad faith, constantly lying to itself, from epoch to epoch, from jostling generation



to generation, from rabid racial colony to racial colony. Ironically, where the white supremacist nature of the white supremacist world is stubbornly ignored by, or somehow invisible to most whites, especially liberal and well-meaning whites, those nonwhites who, for whatever reason, undertake the painful process(es) of developing and/or redeveloping a *revolutionary* (as opposed to *reactionary* or racial essentialist) relationship with their respective indigenous or precolonial cultures and civilizations are often doubly alienated: Alienated, on the one hand, of course, in the white supremacist world on account of their acute consciousness of white supremacy and solemn vow to end its violence; but also, alienated, on the other hand, in their respective racial colonial communities because anti-black racist bad faith, although of a different sort than that plaguing white folk in a white supremacist world, has been so intensely internalized.<sup>6</sup> The ideology of white supremacy is deep-seated and diabolical in that it is used to mask—to *white mask*, as Fanon would have it—the “moral chaos” and “physical chaos” it irrationally (from the point of view of revolutionary humanism) brings into being. Baldwin continues his critique of “the idea of white supremacy”:

Americans have made themselves notorious by the shrillness and the brutality with which they have insisted on this idea, but they did not invent it; and it has escaped the world's notice that those very excesses of which Americans have been guilty imply a certain, unprecedented uneasiness over the idea's life and power, if not, indeed, the idea's validity. The idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization (the present civilization, which is the only one that matters; all previous civilizations are simply “contributions” to our own) and are therefore civilization's guardians and defenders. Thus it was impossible for Americans to accept the black man as one of themselves, for to do so was to jeopardize their status as white men. But not so to accept him was to deny his human reality, his human weight and complexity, and the strain of denying the overwhelmingly undeniable forced Americans into rationalizations so fantastic that they approached the pathological. (p. 172)

It is the paradoxes and pathological nature of white supremacy that angers blacks, among other nonwhites. This anger, this distinctly black anger at the absurdities of antiblack racism and white supremacy is what drove Fanon to the point where he told a white mother, who sought to placate him in light of her son's antiblack racist remarks: “Kiss the handsome Negro's ass, madame!” Many may think that Fanon went too far, but those same fine folk have not critically considered the many millions, perhaps billions of ways in which blacks' “human reality,” blacks' “human weight and complexity,” to go back to Baldwin, have historically been, and currently continue to be, denied, erased, and/or rendered invisible.

It is the long-denied humanity of blacks that black anger at antiblack racism and white supremacy seeks to address and, in a sense, reclaim. Fanon (1967) fumed: "If the white man challenges my humanity, I will impose my whole weight as a man on his life and show him that I am not that 'sho' good eatin' ' that he persists in imagining. I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone: That of demanding human behavior from the other" (p. 229). The discussion of violence above may be shocking to some of my readers (well, maybe not some of *my* anti-racist readers, both white and nonwhite), but the reality of the racial matter is—to cut to the core of my concerns here—that many blacks, which is to say many of the most wretched of the earth, have had lived-experiences in the antiblack racist and white supremacist world, the only God-forsaken world that they know, which makes them, whether moderates or militants, radicals or revolutionaries, resonate with the anger that Fanon and Baldwin audaciously capture with their weighted words.

What is more, for those who thought Fanon may have gone too far by telling the liberal racist white mother: "Kiss the handsome Negro's ass, madame!" They should surely brace themselves for the equivalent in Baldwin's corpus. Here he expresses what many blacks consider one of our most taboo topics, the topic that causes a hush every time someone utters the name Nat Turner or the Mau Mau.<sup>7</sup> Baldwin (1955), ever unafraid to challenge his readers to rethink everything they think they knew about black folk and their lived-experiences, speaks the unspeakable in his own special way:

And there is, I should think, no Negro living in America who has not felt, briefly or for long periods, with anguish sharp or dull, in varying degrees and to varying effect, simple, naked and unanswerable hatred; who has not wanted to smash any white face he may encounter in a day, to violate, out of motives of the cruelest vengeance, their women, to break the bodies of all white people and bring them low, as low as that dust into which he himself has been and is being trampled; no Negro, finally, who has not had to make his own precarious adjustment to the "nigger" who surrounds him and to the "nigger" in himself. Yet the adjustment must be made—rather, it must be attempted, the tension perpetually sustained—for without this he has surrendered his birthright as a man no less than his birthright as a black man. The entire universe is then peopled only with his enemies, who are not only white men armed with rope and rifle, but his own far-flung and contemptible kinsmen. Their blackness is his degradation and it is their stupid and passive endurance which makes his end inevitable. (pp. 38–39)

This passage ends with Baldwin's black anger turning in on itself, with it reproducing and perpetuating the very self-negation and black negation that antiblack racism and white supremacy wantonly foster (see Gordon, 1995a, pp. 94–140). Most blacks know that it is ethically and morally

wrong to kill another human being, but even so, somewhere deep within, as a consequence of their violent life-threatening and life-taking lived-experiences in a white supremacist world, many sympathize with the muted madness and frequent moments of rage that antiblack racism and white supremacy provokes and perpetuates. By repressing their anger at antiblack racism and white supremacy, many blacks rechannel their rage and direct it to the white supremacist-constructed and white supremacist-controlled blackness and perceived powerlessness of other blacks. This is one of the main reasons black-on-black violence has reached epidemic proportions (see A. N. Wilson, 1991; D. Wilson, 2005). However, if black anger at antiblack racism and white supremacy was seen, not as mental illness, but as a potentially healthy, a possibly healing and liberating response, which *it is* from a revolutionary black and revolutionary humanist perspective, then it could be harnessed and used as an instrument in the struggle to end antiblack racism and white supremacy.

What Baldwin touches on above is not simply the obvious, which is that blacks indeed do think of visiting whites with “the cruelest vengeance” because of their creation and perpetuation of the white supremacist world, but, even more, that because blacks refuse to acknowledge and own their anger at antiblack racism and white supremacy, that anger is often destabilizing and immobilizing, keeping them caught, in the most desperate of death-throws, on the racial colonial killing floor of white supremacy or, what is worse, turning them into demi-dead, zombie-like black-on-black killing machines. In *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, the African American feminist theorist and cultural critic, bell hooks (1995), spoke directly to this issue when she wrote: “To perpetuate and maintain white supremacy, white folks have colonized black Americans, and a part of that colonizing process has been teaching us to repress our rage, to never make them the targets of any anger we feel about racism. Most black people internalize this message” (p. 14). In directing our anger at antiblack racism to whites, in “mak[ing] them the targets,” instead of blacks or other nonwhites, we then begin to connect with what hooks calls “a constructive healing rage” (p. 18).

**(RE)LEARNING TO LOVE VIA THE CRITICAL THEORIES AND  
COMPASSIONATE VISIONS OF FRANTZ FANON, BELL HOOKS,  
AND JAMES BALDWIN: ANTIRACISM AND REVOLUTIONARY  
BLACKNESS, REVOLUTIONARY HUMANISM  
AND REDEMPTIVE ANGER**

Anger is not always destructive, it can also be constructive, and as blacks decolonize their hearts and minds, there is room for *redemptive anger*—which is to say, *anger aimed at saving someone, especially someone you love, from evil or*

*wrongdoing*. However, we have to be very careful here because all too often the only images of black anger that most of us, black or white, are aware of have been and remain manufactured by the very antiblack racists and white supremacists who have indoctrinated blacks in the practice of subduing and silencing their anger in the first place. It is important here to keep in mind Fanon's discussion above of blacks and blackness in the white supremacist imagination, and European history and culture in general.<sup>8</sup> This means, then, that one-dimensional projections and (mis)representations of black anger (as "blind hatred," "animalistic irrationality" or, as is currently quite common, "reverse racism") aimed at white supremacy must be challenged and more multidimensional methods and models to explore and express black anger must be developed (or redeveloped) and, as shown above, Fanon contributes much to this endeavor. This, also, means that as blacks embrace their anger in the struggle to end antiblack racism and white supremacy, they must constantly deepen and develop their relationship with revolutionary humanism, because without this important ethical element, there is a strong possibility that they may lose sight of the crucial fact that the struggle to end white supremacy is a struggle to end a system—a system which, according to the breathtakingly brilliant Jamaican philosopher, Charles Mills (1997, 1998, 2003a, 2003b), is global, historical, cultural, social, political, metaphysical, institutional, legal, extralegal, epistemic, economic, and somatic. Revolutionary humanism also helps blacks in the process of decolonization to steer clear of demonizing all whites and not making the very necessary critical distinctions that must be made between white racists, whether conservative or liberal, and authentic white antiracists allies who are willing to own, critique, and challenge their latent and left-liberal subtle racism, as well as acknowledge the historical, cultural, social, political, and economic fact that they are super-privileged in the white supremacist world and, as a result of their embrace and practice of revolutionary antiracist principles, consciously use their super-privilege, their whiteness, in the struggle to end antiblack racism and white supremacy.

By combating antiblack racism and white supremacy with revolutionary humanism, blacks embrace *the utility of anger*—that is, they literally use their anger and moral outrage as an instrument in their battle against antiblack racism and white supremacy. By incorporating their anger and moral outrage into their processes of revolutionary self-reclamation and decolonization, blacks hark back to something Audre Lorde (1984) shared with us long ago, in "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," when she wrote, "Anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification, for it is in the painful process of this translation that we identify who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies. Anger is loaded with information and energy" (p. 127).

In working through and working with their anger and moral outrage at antiblack racism and white supremacy, *blacks must positively use the negativity of anger*. In so doing, it becomes an “act of clarification,” and instead of it destabilizing and inducing a deep and destructive depression, it teaches and inspires, which is why Lorde asserted that “[a]nger is loaded with information and energy.” One of the great lessons that using anger as a source for self- and social transformation offers is that ultimately it is *relearning to love*, ourselves and others, that provides us with the strength to continue the struggle, the will to go on, the will to revolutionize our relationships, not only with blacks and other nonwhites, but—and this is precisely why revolutionary humanism is at the heart of revolutionary blackness—with whites as well. However, and here is the hitch, in consciously committing themselves to black liberation, to the struggle to end antiblack racism and white supremacy, blacks must not make the mistake of committing to working only for and with other black people. Their vision of a world without antiblack racism and white supremacy must be broader and more profoundly love-based; meaning, *really* revolutionary humanist, which would also mean intensely incorporating an openness to struggling with any and all authentic antiracist comrades and groups, fostering coalitions and alliances to inspire and strengthen national and international antiracist and anti-imperialist movements.<sup>9</sup>

Because whites (and whiteness), justifiably, will be the “targets” of most of blacks’ antiracist attention and radical political activities, special emphasis will need to be placed on their relearning to love, themselves and other nonwhites, first and foremost, but, as stated of above, whites as well. Blacks in the process of decolonization cannot under any circumstances allow themselves to racially regress, to fall back and begin again to embrace forms of reactionary blackness or racial essentialism that would impede their ability to authentically love whites in the spirit of *antiracism*, *revolutionary humanism*, and *redemptive anger*. But, even as blacks offer whites love, real love, they must bear in mind something Fanon (1967) feared and evocatively expressed in *Black Skin, White Masks*: “One must apologize for daring to offer black love to a white soul” (p. 56). Will blacks’ love still be “black love” to whites in the aftermath of blacks’ antiracist use of redemptive anger and relearning to love themselves and whites? And, if indeed blacks’ love is still considered “black love” by whites, will it be able, and enough, to inspire whites to really wrestle with and wrench themselves free from white supremacist conceptions of whiteness? Is there a possibility of positive and/or progressive whiteness outside of white supremacy? Will there still be a need for blackness if antiblack racism is eradicated and a truly post-white supremacist world is achieved?<sup>10</sup>

This brings us to the another major reason Fanon devoted so much of *Black Skin, White Masks* to an exploration of blackness in the white imagination.

It revolved around his earnest intention to lucidly demonstrate to whites that white supremacy, which he referred to as "white superiority," had/has physical, psychological, individual, and institutional (i.e., superstructural) dimensions to it and that, consciously or unconsciously, they were/are, by the very fact of their whiteness in a white supremacist world, connected to and complicit in its maintenance and machinations. There is no neutrality. No raceless purgatory. No way around this issue, even for the most liberal and well-meaning whites. They need to honestly and openly acknowledge complicity in, and collaboration with white supremacy, or else what we have is more of the same: more of the "Negro myth," whether the "African savage," the "black buck," the "black rapist," the "black bitch," the "black mammy," or the "welfare queen"; more of the dastardly denials and brutal betrayals which have come to characterize black/white (or, rather, nonwhite/white) relationships, both professional and personal; and, more liberal and left-leaning white folk feeling good about not overtly practicing racial domination and oppression, but not really grappling with the hard fact that white supremacy is both ideology *and* action (as well as unprincipled inaction), it is antihuman thought and antihuman behavior that is deeply and, most often to well-meaning whites, invisibly imbedded in every crack and every crevice of the social mores and superstructure of white supremacist society, which, as quiet as it has been kept, continues long after individual whites come to authentic antiracist critical consciousness. What well-meaning white folk frequently fail to understand is that even though they individually may not embrace or practice overt forms of racial domination and oppression (especially not physically or verbally violent forms of antiblack racism and white supremacy), yet and still by not taking a proactive position against the many millions, perhaps billions of ways that a white supremacist society constantly socializes and resocializes its citizens, white and nonwhite, to accept and embrace white supremacy, they in effect support and affirm the very white supremacist system they vehemently claim to want to see toppled.

It is not enough, then, for whites in a white supremacist world to say that they do not believe in or practice antiblack racism. By its very definition, a white supremacist world is a racist world, a world of physical and psychological racial violence, a world where nonwhites are visible only to the extent that they fit into the figments of white folks' imaginations. Fanon stingingly stated: "There is a quest for the Negro, the Negro is in demand, one cannot get along without him, he is needed, but only if he is made palatable in a certain way" (p. 176). In attempting to make, or succeeding in making, nonwhites "palatable in a certain way," liberal and well-meaning whites, those whites who claim to want nothing whatsoever to do with white supremacy, actually reveal their subtle and sometimes schizophrenic investment in white supremacy. It is here that liberal and well-meaning

whites fall into bad faith and make the mistake of believing that they do not embrace and practice white supremacy.

It is possible for liberal and well-meaning whites to welcome nonwhites, and blacks in particular, into their social and political spaces, but the moment that the nonwhite thinks and acts in a way not sanctioned by liberal racist white supremacy, the moment that the nonwhite expresses values and beliefs counter to the conventional wisdom of white supremacy, the moment the nonwhite critically calls into question the subtleties of liberal racist white supremacy, it is in that very moment that liberal and well-meaning whites reveal their embrace and practice of white supremacy and their clandestinely deep-seated desire to control and colonize (or, rather, recolonize) the life-worlds and lived-experiences of nonwhites. Though not physically violent, experiences such as these violate nonwhites nonetheless and, what is more, they wound and scar on a deeper level and in ways often extremely difficult to critique and comment on, because they wound the spirit and scar the soul (recall Du Bois's discourse on "double consciousness," the "color-line," the "Veil," and "second-sight" in *The Souls of Black Folk*, *Darkwater*, and *The Gift of Black Folk*; see Du Bois, 1972, 1997, 1999; Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2010, forthcoming). This is what, without pathos, Fanon is painstakingly analyzing in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and this is also one of the reasons he gave such an extended critical discussion to blackness in the white imagination.

Fanon observed that white supremacist conceptions of blackness also impact black folks' conceptions of themselves, especially considering the racial colonization of black life-worlds and lived-experiences. He demonstrated that blacks were just as susceptible to the ideologies of antiblack racism and white supremacy as whites. He also emphasized the ways that blacks'—often unconscious—internalization of antiblack racism made them complicit in and surreptitious sources of white supremacy. For Fanon, even blacks' *unconscious*, that is, even that part of their mind that is inaccessible to them but which, nonetheless, affects their thought and behavior, is racially colonized by the insidious ideologies of antiblack racism and white supremacy:

In Europe the Negro has one function: that of symbolizing the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul. In the collective unconscious of *homo occidentalis*, the Negro—or, if one prefers, the color black—symbolizes evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, famine. . . . In Martinique, whose collective unconscious makes it a European country, when a "blue" Negro—a coal-black one—comes to visit, one reacts at once: "What bad luck is he bringing?" The collective unconscious is not dependent on cerebral heredity; it is the result of what I shall call the unreflected imposition of a culture. Hence there is no reason to be surprised when an Antillean [a black person] exposed to waking-dream therapy relives the same fantasies as a European. It is because the

Antillean partakes of the same collective unconscious as the European. (pp. 190–191)

Why does the black share “the same collective unconscious as the European?” Because of what Fanon called “cultural imposition,” which emphasizes not only the physical violence but also the psychological and ideological violence of antiblack racist colonization (pp. 193–195). Cultural imposition dislocates blacks, violently (and often silently) moving them from the African worldview to the white supremacist worldview. It encourages black negation and normalizes the ideologies of antiblack racism and white supremacy. In a white supremacist world, Fanon declared, “[i]t is normal for the Antillean to be anti-Negro. Through the collective unconscious the Antillean has taken over all the archetypes belonging to the European. . . . There is no help for it: I am a white man. For unconsciously I distrust what is black in me, that is, the whole of my being” (p. 191). In distrusting and despising their blackness, in not consciously critiquing white supremacist antiblack constructions of blackness, most blacks’ lifeworlds and lived-experiences are nothing other than a long series of violent self-negations. They reject blackness and embrace whiteness without ever realizing that what they are really rejecting are white supremacist antiblack racist constructions and (mis)representations of blackness. Furthermore, because both their conscience and their unconscious have been colonized by the ideologies of antiblack racism and white supremacy, they lack the capacity to embrace and practice the counterideologies, radical politics, and critical social theories of revolutionary blackness, revolutionary humanism, and redemptive anger.

Just as liberal and well-meaning whites must come to terms with their conscious and unconscious collaborations with white supremacy, Fanon challenged blacks to rupture their relationships with, and combat their—however unconscious—internalizations of antiblack racism that made them collaborators in and perpetrators of white supremacy. However, as Fanon was quick to point out, not all internalizations of antiblack racism and white supremacy have been, or are unconscious. He critically reflected, “I read white books and little by little I take into myself the prejudices, the myths, the folklore that have come to me from Europe” (pp. 191–192). In antiblack racist and white supremacist societies, as he stated above, “[i]t is normal for the Antillean to be anti-Negro.” The truth is that blacks in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world have been so insidiously induced, so brutally brainwashed with the supposed sanctity of whiteness that “[w]ithout turning to the idea of collective catharsis, it would be easy for me to show that, without thinking,” without critically and consciously embracing and practicing revolutionary black decolonization, “the Negro



selects himself as an object capable of carrying the burden of the original sin." Fanon went even further:

The white man chooses the black man for this function, and the black man who is white also chooses the black man [to represent "the original sin"]. The black Antillean is the slave of this cultural imposition. After having been the slave of the white man, he enslaves himself. The Negro is in every sense of the word a victim of white civilization. (p. 192)

Here is Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness" taken to its most masochistic, self-negating, and antiblack racist extreme and, almost as if faithfully following Du Bois, Fanon does not relent or equivocate. The great tragedy, and a distinct recurring theme throughout *Black Skin, White Masks*, is blacks' participation in their own enslavement and re-enslavement, in their own colonization and recolonization. Fanon begins the book emphasizing that the "black man wants to be white," without realizing that the "white man slaves to reach a human level" (p. 9). One of the consequences of whites' white supremacy, European imperialism, and racial colonization of nonwhites is that they, whites, have lost a lot (or, in many instances, most) of their own humanity. In robbing nonwhites of their humanity and human rights, whites, ironically, lost touch with their humanity, with true universal human values, with simple transgenerational and transcultural concepts, such as human worth and human dignity, mutual respect and moral recognition between human beings.<sup>11</sup>

In whites' efforts to impose white supremacist and Eurocentric values and beliefs on the nonwhite cultures they roguishly racially colonized in order to become superhumans ("whites"), they crudely created subhumans ("nonwhites") without considering the irreparable consequences. Now, in the antiblack racist and white supremacist world, instead of aspiring to be human, in a truly universal and nonracial sense, most (but certainly not all) blacks, among other nonwhites, dream of being white and partaking in the spoils of white supremacy. Why, my critical readers may earnestly ask? Because, it could be solemnly said in response, *to be white is to be human, if not superhuman, in a white supremacist world*. To be nonwhite is to be subhuman, if it can be considered human at all, in a white supremacist world, in the world as it currently and actually exists.<sup>12</sup> Bearing in mind blacks' internalization of antiblack racism in a white supremacist world, Fanon sadly summed up the situation:

The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior*. . . . One can hear the glib remark: The Negro makes himself inferior. But the truth is that he is made inferior. . . . The disaster of the man of

color lies in the fact that he was enslaved. The disaster and the inhumanity of the white man lie in the fact that somewhere he has killed man. (pp. 93, 149, 231, emphasis in original)

It is important here to emphasize that Fanon was not alone in critically theorizing the dialectics of whiteness and blackness—that is, the diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black inferiority. In his 1963 classic *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin, again, came to conclusions strikingly similar to those of Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*. For example, Fanon wrote, “the black man is supposed to be a good nigger. . . . The European knows and he does not know. On the level of reflection, a Negro is a Negro; but in the unconscious there is the firmly fixed image of the nigger-savage” (pp. 35, 199). Taking a tone and timbre reminiscent of Fanon, Baldwin (1963), in characteristic bluntness, told his black readers: “You can only be destroyed by believing that you really are what the white world calls a *nigger*” (p. 14, emphasis in original). Then, almost as if he were in direct dialogue with Fanon, Baldwin blasts conscious and unconscious white supremacist “firmly fixed image[s]” of blacks as “nigger-savage[s],” stating “the black man has functioned in the white man’s world as a fixed star, as an immovable pillar: and as he moves out of his place, heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations” (p. 20). As with Fanon, Baldwin brazenly sought “to go beyond the white man’s definitions” of blackness, toward revolutionary blackness, toward revolutionary humanism, toward redemptive anger and, most of all, real love (p. 20).<sup>13</sup>

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1967) asserted, “It is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process:—primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization—or, better, the epidermalization—of this inferiority” (pp. 10–11). For Baldwin, the “social and economic realities” of most blacks centered on their lived-experiences in the ghetto and their lived-endurances of government-sanctioned institutionalized or superstructural antiblack racism, and he and Fanon critically engaged the political economy of both whiteness and blackness in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. Baldwin boldly challenged his liberal and well-meaning white readers’ reality by writing defiantly and directly to his black readers about his dogged disagreement with his “innocent country,” meaning the United States, which he contended intentionally created “Negroes” (i.e., the *Negroization* of enslaved and “emancipated” Africans) and quarantined them to the unremitting antiblack racist realities of coldly calculated “slave quarters,” “slums,” and “ghettoes”—from New York and Philadelphia, to Chicago and Detroit; from Atlanta and New Orleans, to Denver and Dallas; and, from St. Louis and Seattle, to Los Angeles and Oakland (see Baldwin,

1998, esp., pp. 42–53, 170–186). Baldwin wrote further of the harsh sociohistorical realities of America's racial hierarchy and the ways in which it revolved around the diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black inferiority—a dialectic that incessantly emphasized, in as many wicked ways as possible or, rather, in the most barbarous manners imaginable, that blacks are not simply “subhuman,” but most often viewed as “nonhuman” from white “civilization's” frightening frame of reference.

As with Fanon's emphasis on blacks' “social and economic realities” in *Black Skin, White Masks*, in *The Fire Next Time* Baldwin, too, boldly pointed to the political economy of the niggerification of blacks, telling them that their hyper-racialized ghetto reality was the calculated consequence of whites' willful neglect of their humanity, history, and culture. Blacks, Baldwin (1963) blazed, were expected to “make peace with [the] mediocrity” of their life-worlds and lived-experiences within the white supremacist world (p. 18). It was, indeed, a wicked world, much like the one described by Fanon, which drearily drummed inferiority and mediocrity, instead of inspiration and ambition, into blacks' heads and hearts. Admittedly, it is extremely difficult to deal with Baldwin's earnest assertion that blacks' excruciating antiblack racist anguish was intended, was essentially part and parcel of the social reality and political economy of their simultaneous and incessant *de-Africanization* and *niggerification* within the white supremacist world, but, he revealingly wrote lovingly to blacks: “Know whence you came. If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go. The details and symbols of your life have been deliberately constructed to make you believe what white people say about you. Please try to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure, does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity and fear” (pp. 18–19).

Both Baldwin and Fanon challenged blacks and whites to transgress and transcend their respective racialized situations, although, both argued, the pitfalls and painful processes involved in overcoming reactionary blackness and white supremacy greatly and gravely differ. What united their visions of a post-white supremacist world was their emphasis on revolutionary humanism and the transcending and transfiguring power of love, *real love*. Fanon (1967) humbly began *Black Skin, White Masks* with one purpose, and one purpose alone, “[t]o understand and to love” (p. 7). He climatically concluded his text sternly stating:

I, the man of color, want only this: That the tool never possess the man. That the enslavement of man by man cease forever. That is, of one by another. That it be possible for me to discover and to love man, wherever he may be. (p. 231)

Baldwin (1963), always more of a lover than a fighter, wrote to his beloved black readers, “These men,” these white men, “are your brothers—your lost,

younger brothers. And if the word *integration* means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it. For this is your home, my friend[s], do not be driven from it; great men have done great things here, and will again, and we can make America what America must become" (p. 21, emphasis in original). It is redemptive anger that Baldwin touched on when he wrote, "We, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are," and it is redemptive anger that compelled and enabled Fanon to conclude *Black Skin, White Masks* with revolutionary humanism and real love.

Fanon's revolutionary humanism registers as a radical rupture with, what Jean-Paul Sartre (1968) correctly called, Europe's "racist humanism," a hollow humanism, which actually is not and never has been a "humanism," in any real sense of the word, at all, since it deliberately and consistently creates and re-creates "slaves and monsters," as opposed to human beings who are deeply compassionate and morally committed to the welfare of human beings around the world, without regard to race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation (p. 26). Sartre's work was, indeed, a major source of inspiration and excitement for Fanon, but it was also, in many senses, a major source of deep depression and dogged disappointment. In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon revealed that he felt that Sartre simultaneously went further than any other white intellectual-activist to theorize "the lived-experience of the black" in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world, but he also felt that Sartre took almost unforgivable liberties with black humanity, black history, black culture, and black philosophy in his efforts to explain Negritude to whites. In some senses we could say that Fanon was writing about, or to Sartre in *Black Skin, White Masks* when he wrote, "There is a quest for the Negro, the Negro is in demand, one cannot get along without him, he is needed, but only if he is made palatable in a certain way," and "The European knows and he does not know. On the level of reflection, a Negro is a Negro; but in the unconscious there is the firmly fixed image of the nigger-savage" (pp. 176, 199).

For Fanon, when Sartre attempted to make Negritude more "palatable in a certain way" to whites, the essence and authenticity of Negritude—which is to say, *what* it represented to blacks and *why* it was so important and innovative—was, for all intents and purposes, lost. Sartre approached Negritude, and race in general, from a white left-liberal Hegelian antiblack racist and paternalist perspective, instead of critically engaging it from a revolutionary black and revolutionary antiracist perspective, and this, of course, was Fanon's main contention with Sartre's (re)theorization of Negritude. Sartre was only willing to go so far, from Fanon's point of view, before he threw up his "bloody" and/or, as he himself put it, "dirty" hands, as so many well-meaning white left-liberals had before him when confronted with the

confounding nature of their, however unconscious, complicity in and perpetuation of antiblack racism and white supremacy (see *Les Mains Sales* or *Dirty Hands* in Sartre, 1989).

Negritude emanated from deep within the bowels of “the lived-experience of the black” in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world, and Fanon felt that Sartre, in approaching Negritude from a white left-liberal Hegelian antiblack racist and paternalist perspective, “robbed” blacks of their “last chance,” of their only road—or so it seemed at the time—to revolutionary blackness. Revolutionary blackness was not then, and it is not now, for blacks only, but it is a tool, and sometimes, as Amilcar Cabral (1979) might have said, a “weapon,” open to any and all who really and truly seek to critically understand “the lived-experience of the black” from a revolutionary antiracist or, rather, a revolutionary anti-imperialist perspective (see Rabaka, 2009, pp. 227–284). This means, then, that revolutionary blackness is not premised on pigmentation and biology, but on a principled commitment to human liberation and critical human science methodology. Because Sartre, for whatever reason, whether consciously or unconsciously, continued to engage blackness—in this instance, Negritude—from an antiblack racist and paternalist perspective, he and the white left-liberals he wrote to and spoke for remained “sealed in [their] whiteness” and, thus, he did not in any substantive ways contribute to the disalienation and decolonization of blacks, but actually recolonized blacks by keeping them “sealed” in their blackness (Fanon, 1967, p. 9). Recall, Fanon wrote above: “In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of the [human] character. As long as one cannot understand this fact, one is doomed to talk in circles about the ‘black problem’” (p. 189). Sartre neglected to self-reflexively own and critique his—again, however unconscious—internalization of antiblack racism and white supremacy and, as is usually the case with white liberal (and/or white “radical”) racists, in his well-intentioned efforts to contribute to black liberation and black decolonization he unwittingly recolonized blacks and paternalistically shared with and assured his liberal white readers that they need not worry because Negritude would be short-lived, because Negritude, Sartre (2001) surmised, “is for destroying itself, it is a passage and not an outcome, a means and not an ultimate end” (p. 137). Because he would not self-reflexively own and critique his whiteness, which is a prerequisite in order for would-be white antiracist allies to really and truly understand revolutionary blackness and revolutionary humanism, Sartre “doomed” himself to “talk[ing] in circles about the ‘black problem.’”

Sartre’s intervention into the discourse of Negritude is important with regard to the present discussion on revolutionary blackness, revolutionary humanism, and critical race theory because it offers a provocative intellectual, historical and cultural example of the limits of well-meaning white

left-liberal racism and paternalism. Fanon's critique of Sartre's intervention into, and (re)theorization of Negritude in an effort to make it more "palatable" to whites demonstrates some of the ways in which white liberals and, even more, many white antiracist radicals, internalize, embrace, and project antiblack racist constructions of blackness onto blacks and it, also, lucidly lays out the distinct differences between *reactionary blackness* and *revolutionary blackness*. Let us now, then, critically engage that intellectual history-making exchange between Sartre and Negritude and, subsequently, examine *what* and *why* Fanon felt so passionately that, no matter how well-meaning, Jean-Paul Sartre, "a friend of the colored peoples," had "robbed" blacks of their "last chance" to truly and fully transition from nascent Negritude into authentic revolutionary blackness.

**BEYOND BLACK ORPHEUS: FANON'S CRITIQUE OF  
SARTREAN NEGRITUDE AND WHITE LEFT-LIBERAL  
RACISM AND PATERNALISM—OR, ON JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO REACTIONARY BLACKNESS, CRITICAL  
RACE THEORY, AND THE DISCOURSE  
ON DECOLONIZATION**

Synthesizing elements of Cesairean and Senghorian Negritude, an extremely important, though often-overlooked, third stream of Negritude was controversially conceptualized by the critically acclaimed French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. It was Sartre who, undoubtedly, introduced and helped to popularize the theory amongst white Marxists, white leftists, and white academics. "Sartrean Negritude," if you will, has had a life both dependent on and independent of Cesairean and Senghorian Negritude. This is so, partly, because of Sartre's popularity within white Marxist and leftist circles, especially from the mid-1950s until his death in 1980, and also, as Robert Bernasconi (2005b) has observed, because Sartre's articulation of Negritude was geared toward explaining Negritude to whites and emphasized its supposed temporality and transient nature. Thus, Sartre was and remains Negritude's preeminent proponent and interlocutor of European descent.

To his credit, Sartre and his philosophy are distinguished from a host of well-meaning and would-be antiracist intellectual-activists of European descent in the sense that he entered into critical dialogue with Cesaire and Senghor, and later Fanon, on not only "the class question," but also "the colonial question" and "the race question." Although often overlooked in Sartre studies, postcolonial studies, and racial and ethnic studies, Sartre made several significant contributions to the study of racism and colonialism, ironically initiating his forays into these areas in 1945 with two essays on antiblack racism in America: "Retour des Etats Unis: Ce qui j'ai appris du

problème noir" ("Return from the United States: What I Learned about the Black Problem") and "Le problème noir aux États-Unis" ("The Black Problem in the United States"). He continued his critique of antiblack racism in America with his 1946 play *The Respectful Prostitute* and an incomplete essay entitled, "Revolutionary Violence," which explored the evolution of white supremacist consciousness and antiblack racist oppression during the period of African American enslavement (Sartre, 1989, 1992). Sartre then shifted his focus from developing an existential-phenomenology of antiblack racism to developing an existential-phenomenology of anti-Semitism in his classic *Anti-Semite and Jew* (Sartre, 1965; Judaken, 2006). After *Anti-Semite and Jew*, which was originally published in 1946, he offered several significant occasional essays on and interventions into racial colonialism and European and American imperialism in the international context (see Bernasconi, 2005b; Judaken, 2008; Gordon, 2002; J. S. Murphy, 2002).

"Along with Marx," Robert Young (2006) argues, "Sartre constituted one of the major philosophical influences on Francophone anticolonial thinkers and activists, and through them postcolonial studies. Sartre stands out as the Western Marxist who was most conspicuously involved in the politics of the anticolonial movements, both in terms of a developing preoccupation with resistance to colonialism in his work and in his own personal political activism" (pp. ix–x). Hence, antiracist and anticolonial theorists and activists have often had an affinity with Sartre that is second, perhaps, only to Marx among Western European philosophers. However, similar to Marx, Sartre seemed to consistently privilege class *over* race in his writings on race, ultimately arguing that racism is a consequence of capitalism and, further, that as a by-product of capitalism, racism will be eradicated with a "real" socialist revolution. This point will be discussed in greater detail below, but what is important to acknowledge here is that Sartre's writings on racism and colonialism contributed to the discourse on decolonization. Young further elaborates:

Sartre was extensively concerned with colonial and "Third World" issues from 1948 onwards, from his first engagements with racism and Negritude, to the triumph of revolutionary China in 1949, the colonial wars in Indo-China, Morocco and Algeria, the Cuban Revolution, American imperialism in the war in Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as French immigration policies. The implications of his involvement can only be fully addressed in the wider context of his other writings in these areas: the famous Preface ("Black Orpheus") to Senghor's collection, *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malagache de langue française* (1948), the chapter on colonial violence in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), the appendix on the position of African Americans in the *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1983), and the many occasional writings and interviews on the Vietnam War which, once Algeria had succeeded in winning independence, became his major political preoccupation. Sartre, an

active political campaigner, increasingly began to integrate these issues into the preoccupations of his own work. (p. x)<sup>14</sup>

Sartre's engagement with Negritude is distinct in that it represents the first time that he entered into critical dialogue with the racially oppressed and racially colonized. Unlike his essays on antiblack racism in America and anti-Semitism, in "Black Orpheus" Sartre sought to not simply align himself with and explain Negritude but, even more, to defend, define, and, from Fanon's critical perspective, *redefine* Negritude to make it more palatable for liberal and left-leaning white audiences.<sup>15</sup> Fanon (1967) regretfully wrote, "At the very moment when I was trying to grasp my own being, Sartre, who remained The Other, gave me a name and thus shattered my last illusion" (p. 137). In his efforts to explain Negritude to whites, Sartre took many liberties with the theory, producing his own unique existential phenomenological Negritude that greatly differed from Cesairean and Senghorian Negritude. Consequently, Sartre's work provides a missing link and an extremely important point of departure in any effort geared toward understanding and thoroughly assessing the significance of Negritude, Fanon's *black* philosophical foundation, and Fanon's contributions to critical race theory for the development of an antiracist, anticapitalist, and anticolonialist critical theory of contemporary society (i.e., an *Africana* critical theory). By, first, critically engaging Sartrean Negritude and, secondly, by exploring Fanon's critique of Eurocentrism and, ultimately, white left-liberal antiblack racism and paternalism in Sartre's conception and articulation of Negritude, this section seeks to concretize several of the critical theoretic discoveries concerning the inadequacies of both whiteness and reactionary blackness, and the necessity of revolutionary blackness and revolutionary humanism, as discussed above.

Ironically, according to the Kenyan philosopher Dismas Masolo (1994), Jean-Paul Sartre contributed the "first systematic definition" of Negritude in his 1948 essay "Orphée Noir," or "Black Orpheus" (p. 29). As distinct from both Cesairean and Senghorian Negritude, Sartrean Negritude understands the black's "affective attitude toward the world"—that is, his or her "Negritude"—to be a necessary "negativity," an "antiracist racism [that] is the only way by which to abolish racial differences" (Sartre, 2001, pp. 129, 118). Neither Cesaire nor Senghor advocated, as Sartre did, "a raceless society" as the end result of Negritude, but because (both *Africana* and *European*) scholars in the Francophone and Anglophone academic worlds have given greater attention and critical acclaim to Sartre's writings on Negritude, he has, in a sense, become the go-to-guy for knowledge on Negritude and, by default, "the" philosopher of Negritude (p. 137). However, Irene Gendzier (1973) has stated that Sartre was, indeed, "sympathetic of Negritude," but may have been "uncertain as to precisely what the movement was about"



(pp. 37–38). Sartre's supposed uncertainty, the resultant conceptual ambiguity, and his refusal to revise and/or revisit his articulation of Negritude, as Césaire and Senghor did, has—to many contemporary workers in black radical thought—rendered his “Negritude” at best lethargic (see Gordon, 1995b, pp. 30–35; Masolo, 1994, pp. 30–37; Rabaka, 2009, pp. 111–164; Sekyi-Out, 1996, pp. 16–17).

Sartre makes a distinction between Césaire's “subjective” Negritude and Senghor's “objective” Negritude. Senghorian Negritude seeks to rescue and reclaim ancient African civilizations, customs, myths, values, and so on, where Césairean Negritude endeavors to “return to the source” (à la Amílcar Cabral [1973]) only insofar as the past pertains to, or can be shown to have a meaningful impact on, eradicating racial oppression and colonial exploitation in the present (and the longed-for liberated future). Despite making this distinction, Sartre, much to the dismay of Negritudists of both persuasions, argued that Césairean and Senghorian Negritude ultimately yield the same result, which contradicts his assertion that Césaire's subjective Negritude is “revolutionary” because it “asserts [its] solidarity with the oppressed of every color” and “pursues the liberation of all” (Sartre, 2001, pp. 136–137). Sartre did not challenge Senghor's “black soul” Negritude as much as he assimilated it, and translated it into what he termed “the Being-in-the-world of the black.” Ironically, even after embracing certain aspects of Senghor's backward-looking or, rather, nostalgic Negritude, Sartre goes on to claim that the only “road” that can lead to the “abolition of differences of race” is a “subjective” one—one remarkably similar to the “road” traveled by the synoptic Césaire, and, soon afterwards, Fanon and Cabral, among others. The journey down the subjective “road” is very brief; it is only a “moment of separation or negativity,” as Sartre is quick to essentialize blacks and whites, putting forward an almost ontological division between Africans and Europeans (p. 118).

From Sartre's point of view, what is objective for the black is not necessarily the lived-experience of racism and colonialism, but—and here he is foolishly following Senghor—black “soul,” black “nature,” and “the Essence of blackness” (p. 119). In “Black Orpheus,” then, Sartre exhibits a tendency to associate blacks with peasants, agriculture, sex, “erotic mysticism,” “phallic erection” and the earth, and, in a sense, he puts forward a Negritude of black naturalness that unwittingly places his existential phenomenological Eurocentrism, Marxist/white leftist racism, and liberal white supremacist humanism into bold relief. Sartre proudly proclaimed:

Techniques have contaminated the white peasant, but the black peasant remains the great male of the earth, the sperm of the world. His existence is the great vegetal patience; his work is the repetition from year to year of the sacred coitus. Creating and nourished because he creates. To till, to plant, to eat, is to

make love with nature . . . it is in this that they join the dances and the phallic rites of the black Africans. (p. 131)

It would be difficult to deny Sartre's digestion of and preoccupation with Senghor's Negritude of black naturalness, replete with racist and sexist references. Sartrean Negritude refashions colonial anthropology and unwittingly contributes to ethnophilosophy with its emphasis on "the dances and the phallic rites of the black Africans," African primitiveness, and ancient African rituals and customs, as well as its preoccupation with the sexual potency of primordial or "primitive" African men, "the great male[s] of the earth, the sperm of the world," as he put it. For Sartre, Negritude celebrates black creation, black sexuality, black spirituality, black bodies, black firm phalluses, black workers, and black consciousness; "it is based upon a black soul," he asserted drawing from Senghor, and "on a certain quality common to the thoughts and to the behavior of blacks." Observe the abstractness and ambiguity in Sartre's discourse on Negritude. Part of the problem has to do with the pronouncements of the objective Negritudists and, most especially, their nostalgic claims of a single black essence, despite countless historical and cultural records and artifacts that point to black folks' very varied *lived-experiences* and *lived-endurances* of holocaust, enslavement, racial colonization, segregation, and assimilation, not only in the diaspora, but on the African continent as well. Fanon's (1967) riposte to Sartre's philosophical flirtation with Senghor's objective Negritude was clear and concise: "Negro experience is not a whole, for there is not merely *one* Negro, there are *Negroes*" (p. 136, all emphasis in original).

In contrast to Senghor's objective Negritude, Sartre identifies Césaire's subjective Negritude, a Negritude that moves beyond a mere chronicling of the "great" African past; a Negritude with one foot on the continental past and the other on the diasporan present; and, finally, a Negritude that pulls no punches and exhibits an extreme "passion for liberty," said Sartre. Césaire's Negritude, we are told, is *revolutionary Negritude* because it is focused on black "being" and black "becoming" in the present and future, not ancient rituals, "the mysterious bubbling of black blood," or African polyrhythms (Sartre, 2001, p. 138). It is not a Negritude of universality, but one of specificity and, as Sartre observed, it is based on a "sense of revolt and love of liberty." He continues: "What Césaire destroys is not *all* culture but rather white culture; what he brings to light is not desire for *everything* but rather the revolutionary aspirations of the oppressed black; what he touches in his very depths is not the spirit but a certain specific, concrete form of humanity" (p. 127, all emphasis in original). Césaire snatches surrealism, "that European poetic movement," away from the Europeans who created it and, to use Sartre's terse term, "de-Frenchify[s]" it, and *Africanizes* it to speak to the special needs of the (continental *and* diasporan) African world

(pp. 128, 123). Césaire's poetry, then, signals the de(con)struction of surrealism and the reconstruction of Negritude, or "Africanity," as Senghor would soon suggest.

Even after his intense analysis of Senghorian and Césairean Negritude, which is to say, although he devoted the bulk of his essay to a critical treatment of objective and subjective Negritude, or the divergent "degrees of Negritude," Sartre took an odd turn and ended the piece emphasizing "the temporality of black existence," unequivocally announcing that "Negritude is for destroying itself," it is "the root of its own destruction" (pp. 133, 136–173; see also Fanon, 1967, p. 133). This is the "more serious" matter that "the prophets of Negritude" bring to the fore, a matter of intellectual, political, and racial life or death. The following passage from Sartre's "Black Orpheus," which was made famous by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, perhaps captures the conundrum best and, consequently, should be quoted at length:

But there is something more important: The black, as we have said, creates an antiracist racism for himself. In no sense does he wish to rule the world: He seeks the abolition of all ethnic privileges, wherever they come from; he asserts his solidarity with the oppressed of all colors. At once the subjective, existential, ethnic idea of *Negritude* "passes," as Hegel puts it, into the objective, positive, exact idea of the *proletariat*. "For Césaire," Senghor says, "the white man is the symbol of capital as the Negro is the labor. . . . Beyond the black-skinned men of his race it is the battle of the world proletariat that is his song." That is easy to say, but less easy to think out. And undoubtedly it is no coincidence that the most ardent poets of Negritude are at the same time militant Marxists. But that does not prevent the idea of race from mingling with that of class: The first is concrete and particular, the second is universal and abstract; the one stems from what Jasper calls understanding and the other from intellection; the first is the result of a psychobiological syncretism and the second is a methodical construction based on experience. In fact, Negritude appears as the minor term of a dialectical progression: The theoretical and practical assertion of the supremacy of the white man is the thesis; the position of Negritude as an antithetical value is the moment of negativity. But this negative moment is insufficient by itself, and the blacks who employ it know this very well; they know that it is intended to prepare the synthesis or realization of the human in a society without races. Thus Negritude is the root of its own destruction, it is a transition and not a conclusion, a means and not an ultimate end. (Sartre, 2001, p. 137; see also Fanon, 1967, pp. 132–133)

For Sartre, Negritude was merely a "negative moment," which was ultimately "insufficient by itself." What Negritude lacked, from the Sartrean point of view, was precisely what blacks lacked: an openness to assimilation, which actually meant an openness to Europeanization parading under the guise of modernization, and a more in-depth understanding of

Hegel and, especially, Marx, who, perhaps *not* unbeknownst to Sartre, were both—sometimes subtle and sometimes not so subtle—white supremacists or, at the least, extreme Eurocentrists. For Fanon, Sartre's white left-liberal antiblack racist paternalism, like that of Hegel and Marx, was both undeniable and unbearable.<sup>16</sup> Sartre was not simply explaining Negritude to whites but, even more, he sanctimoniously took it upon himself to redefine and retheorize Negritude, in his mind, making it more "logical" and/or "rational" for both blacks and whites. Fanon questioned Sartre's retheorization of Negritude, wondering aloud whether it was his place, or if he was in a position to state, definitively, *what* it was, *why* it was, and *where* it was logically heading from a Hegelian point of view. In employing the Hegelian dialectic to engage Negritude, Sartre surreptitiously embraced and put into practice a form of *antiblack racist reductionism*, where conventional white supremacist categories, such as whites belonging to the world of reason and blacks belonging to the world of unreason, were projected onto Negritude, and blacks in general—and, all of this was permitted even though, as Sartre himself observed above, Cesairean "subjective" Negritude critiqued and contested such characterizations.

To Fanon, this seemed all wrong, dead wrong, especially Sartre's utilization of the Hegelian dialectic to explain, of all ("black") things, Negritude. Sartre had been asked, as a "friend of the colored peoples," to introduce whites to Negritude, and he took the opportunity to redefine and retheorize (or, rather, Hegelianize) Negritude and, basically, eloquently writing its intellectual epitaph: blacks represented rhythm, emotion, and irrationality (or unreason), where white represented reason, science, and civilization; in the end whites' reason would trump blacks' unreason or racial irrationality. Hence, Sartre said in so many words, whites need not worry themselves about Negritude. It was a puerile passing-phase and would not last long. Fanon (1967) would have none of it, and said so in the firmest words he could find:

"Lay aside your history, your investigations of the past, and try to feel yourself into our rhythms. In a society such as ours, industrialized to the highest degree, dominated by scientism, there is no longer room for your sensitivity. One must be tough if one is to be allowed to live. What matters now is no longer playing the game of the world but subjugating it with integers and atoms. Oh, certainly, I will be told, now and then we are worn out by our lives in big buildings, we will turn to you as we do to our children—to the innocent, the ingenuous, the spontaneous. We will turn to you as to the childhood of the world. You are so real in your life—so funny, that is. Let us run away for a little while from our ritualized, polite civilization and let us relax, bend to those heads, those adorably expressive faces. In a way, you reconcile us with ourselves."

Thus my unreason was countered with reason, my reason with "real reason." Every hand was a losing hand for me. I analyzed my heredity. I made a com-

plete audit of my ailment. I wanted to be typically Negro—it was no longer possible. I wanted to be white—that was a joke. And, when I tried, on the level of ideas and intellectual activity, to reclaim my Negritude, it was snatched away from me. Proof was presented that my effort was only a term in the dialectic. (p. 132)

Fanon found Sartre's Hegelization of Negritude not only paternalistic, but also indicative of his infantilization of blacks, the "childhood of the world." Fanon knew all too well that Negritude had its limitations, but he also knew that existential phenomenology and Marxism had their limitations—something most existentialists, phenomenologists, and Marxists seemed extremely reluctant to admit. Sartre had basically been asked by the Negritude theorists to help to build a bridge from the black world to the white world and vice versa, in the spirit of creating, as Fanon said, "[u]nderstanding among men" and "a new humanism." Instead Sartre betrayed the Negritude theorists, and blacks in general, by Eurocentrically reducing blackness—Negritude in this instance—to "a term in the [Hegelian] dialectic" (p. 7). This was extremely wounding and very deeply felt by Fanon because even though he did not agree with every aspect of Negritude, he saw it as part of the larger black struggle to come to critical consciousness and continue the decolonization process—in other words, it was necessary in order to put blacks on the rocky road to revolutionary blackness and, ultimately, revolutionary humanism. As was argued above concerning blacks ability to positively use anger, as redemptive anger, in their quest for revolutionary blackness, revolutionary humanism, social transformation and human liberation, Fanon contended that Negritude was an important conceptual coordinate in the complex series of struggles that blacks must go through in order to develop their critical consciousness and begin, or continue, the decolonization process. He was adamant about the injury Sartre inflicted:

I said to my friends, "The generation of younger black poets has just suffered a blow that can never be forgiven." Help had been sought from a friend of the colored peoples, and that friend had found no better response than to point out the relativity of what they were doing. For once, that born Hegelian had forgotten that consciousness has to lose itself in the night of the absolute, the only condition to attain to consciousness of self. In opposition to rationalism, he summoned up the negative side, but he forgot that this negativity draws its worth from an almost substantive absoluteness. A consciousness committed to experience is ignorant, has to be ignorant, of the essences and the determinations of its being. *Orphée noir* is a date in the intellectualization of the *experience* of being black. And Sartre's mistake was not only to seek the source of the source but in a certain sense to block that source. (pp. 133–134, all emphasis in original)

Had Sartre really and truly “return[ed] to the source” of blackness, of “the *experience* of being black” in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world, then he would have discovered, as so many black revolutionaries had long before him, that “blacks” did not exist before antiblack racism, and—I unrepentantly reiterate, faithfully following in Fanon’s footsteps—that “what is often called the black soul is a white man’s artifact” (Fanon, 1967, 14; see also Fredrickson, 1981, 1987, 1988, 1995, 1997, 2002; Jordan, 1974, 1977). Think about it for a moment: How many Africans, Australians, or Indians thought of themselves as “black” (no; Africans were/are not the only human beings to be subjected to the bleak “blackness” of racial colonization) prior to Europeans’ imperially defining and redefining them as such? There is a very modern, perhaps even postmodern, political economy to blackness and whiteness, and what well-meaning white liberals have an intellectual historical tendency of overlooking is that blacks did not (and were hard-pressed when they finally decided to) define *themselves* as “blacks,” and that, as quiet as it is kept, this power of racial (re)defining was premised on European myths, histories, and cultures which nonwhites very often knew little or nothing about—that is to say that the power of racial defining and redefining called for particular historical and cultural conditions that were well-beyond the life-worlds and lived-experiences of non-Europeans, of nonwhites. Blackness, in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world, represents the opposite of whiteness, which is one of the reasons Fanon refers to it as a “Manichaean” world where whites are free, and blacks are enslaved; whites are the colonizers, and blacks the colonized; whites are human, and blacks subhuman, again, if they are considered human at all.<sup>17</sup>

In his search for the source of blackness (or Negritude), Sartre fell into his own form of bad faith by refusing to come to terms with the hard fact that the source of blackness, at least the form of reactionary blackness that he was engaging and articulating, lay within whites’ antiblack racist constructions of blackness. For Sartre (2001), “blacks can meet only on that trap-covered ground that the white has prepared for them: the colonist has arranged to be the eternal mediator between the colonized; he is there—always there—even when he is absent, even in the most secret meetings” (p. 121). Fanon, on principle, resented Sartre’s reduction of Negritude to whites’ ready-made antiblack racist deconstructions and misrepresentations of blackness, especially considering the fact that Césaire’s Negritude sought to break with reactionary blackness and promote blacks’ embrace and practice of the process of decolonization and, ultimately, revolutionary blackness. Instead of introducing Negritude, the “Negritude” of the poets and theorists of Negritude, to a wider audience, Sartre concocted a reformist Negritude that was tragically caught within the reactionary black/white world of white supremacy, which is to say, a world already defined by and

for whites, and a world predicated on defining, dehumanizing, and racially colonizing nonwhites, especially blacks.

At the exact anguished moment that blacks had taken it upon themselves to redefine their own reality, Sartre reminded them that white supremacy had already beat them to the punch and, in so doing, Sartre, however unwittingly, dealt Negritude an intellectual deathblow. Fanon felt that Sartre missed the main point of Negritude, which was to remind "Negroes" that they were Africans before they were racially colonized and coerced into accepting their "Negrohood"; they did not have to be "Negroes" and, also, they did not have to be white, they could consciously define and redefine themselves and need not be predetermined figments of someone else's imperial imagination. Fanon (1967) fumed, "[a]nd so it is not I who make a meaning for myself, but it is the meaning that was already there, pre-existing, waiting for me. It is not out of my bad nigger's misery, my bad nigger's teeth, my bad nigger's hunger that I will shape a torch with which to burn down the world, but it is the torch that was already there, waiting for that turn of history" (p. 134). In other words, Negritude (as a specific form of blackness) does not, and will never, fit nicely and neatly into the Hegelian dialectic, or any other Eurocentric schema, because it is much more than a mere reaction to whiteness and because whites have consistently failed to engage it (i.e., blackness) on its own terms and employing revolutionary black and revolutionary antiracist perspectives, research methods, and modes of analysis.

Sartre may, in fact, have been partially right when he wrote that Negritude is "a passage and not an outcome, a means and not an ultimate end," but he neglected to thoroughly engage and critically understand *why* it was a necessary "passage" and an almost mandatory "means" for blacks in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. From Fanon's perspective, Sartre was talking out of turn, he said much more than he should have, because in saying what he did he revealed that, although he was "a friend of the colored peoples," he too had internalized antiblack racism and did not understand that Negritude, however nascent, represented an important early stage in the development of revolutionary blackness and the process of decolonization. For one of the first times in the modern moment, especially post-Harlem Renaissance, to be black was not bad, but good; it was not a negative, but a positive. This was something, something deeply needed by "Negroes" at the time, which Sartre simply did not understand, perhaps, because he had never endured "the lived-experience of the black" in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. Blackness may have begun as a reaction to antiblack racism and white supremacy, but from W. E. B. Du Bois's pioneering Pan-Africanism, to the Harlem Renaissance, through to Negritude it matured more than many whites seem to be able to imagine, let alone critically comprehend.<sup>18</sup> Blackness became more than

a mere reaction to whiteness; it was now, according to Fanon, "immanent in its own eyes." He further declared:

In terms of consciousness, the black consciousness is held out as an absolute density, as filled with itself, a stage preceding any invasion, any abolition of the ego by desire. Jean-Paul Sartre, in the work ["Black Orpheus"], has destroyed black zeal. In opposition to historical becoming, there had always been the unforeseeable. I needed to lose myself completely in Negritude. One day, perhaps, in the depths of that unhappy romanticism. . . . In any case I *needed* not to know. This struggle, this new decline had to take on an aspect of completeness. Nothing is more unwelcome than the commonplace: "You'll change, my boy; I was like that too when I was young . . . you'll see, it will all pass."

The dialectic that brings necessity into the foundation of my freedom drives me out of myself. It shatters my unreflected position. Still in terms of consciousness, black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something, I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal. No probability has any place inside me. My Negro consciousness does not hold itself out as a lack. It is. It is its own follower. (pp. 134–135, all emphasis in original)

Part of what Sartre brilliantly demonstrated by advancing his concept of bad faith is that it is possible for someone to fervently claim to love humanity in a universal sense while committing egregious acts against particular peoples' humanity and violating their human rights. What should also be observed here too, then, is that it is possible for someone to advance that they are "a friend of the colored peoples" while, however subtly, unconsciously or paternalistically, putting forward positions that may seem on the surface to support "colored peoples" and be in their best interest, but in all actuality are deeply detrimental to their unique humanity, history, and culture. Sartre was right: Negritude was "a means and not an ultimate end." However, Sartre was wrong in either completely overlooking or downplaying the importance of Negritude, of blacks' need to explore their blackness on their own terms and for as long as they deemed necessary in their quest to repair, reform and, yes, revolutionize their relationships with themselves, first and foremost, other nonwhites, and, of course, whites as well. It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for blacks to really and truly commit to revolutionary humanism without first going through the process(es) of relearning to love themselves, which is part of what the process(es) of decolonization is, or *should be* about. It seems so unfair to ask blacks to love whites and other nonwhites when so little serious attention and social exercises have been devoted to, first, blacks relearning to love themselves and, second, whites and other nonwhites learning to love and appreciate blacks and their blackness on blacks' own (antiracist and pro-African) terms.



In his Hegelization of Negritude, Sartre also demonstrates his retreat from developing a full-fledged existential phenomenology of race and racism by collapsing race into class. For Sartre, it is the class struggle and class warfare that capitalism and colonialism creates that are the most significant forms of human oppression and exploitation (Sartre, 1963, 1967b, 1974, 1976, 2006). Where he employed Hegel's philosophy of history to explain the transient nature of Negritude to whites in general, he utilized Marx's theories and critiques of capitalism, class struggle, and socialist revolution to make Negritude more appealing to white Marxists and white leftists. As with so many white Marxists and white leftists before him, Sartre (2001) understood racism and colonialism to be important factors impacting the modern world, but—and here's the real rub—racism and colonialism were particular to blacks' "being-in-the-world" and the life-worlds and lived-experiences of other colored and racially colonized people, whereas capitalism and class struggle represented the ultimate "universal Revolution," a struggle that would not only liberate colored and racially colonized folk, but also "the proletariat," by which Sartre means "white workers" (p. 128).

It must be honestly admitted that Sartre did not exaggerate when he wrote, "Undoubtedly it is no coincidence that the most ardent poets of Negritude are at the same time militant Marxists." However, what Sartre's analysis circumvents is the crucial fact that radicals of color are usually initially attracted to Marxism because of its wide-ranging historical and political perspective; its critical theoretical preoccupation with exploitation, alienation, oppression, and domination; and, its emphasis on social transformation and the promise of liberation. But, as soon as radicals of color realize that when white Marxists speak of "exploitation" or "oppression," rarely is racism considered, and colonialism almost always takes a secondary position to the evils of capitalism, they immediately find Marxism to be a false "universal" doctrine, its historical vision horribly Eurocentric and surreptitiously white supremacist, and its supposedly all-encompassing conceptual categories to be so narrowly focused on class and obsessed with capitalist corruption, that Marxism, for all radical political purposes in the interest of antiracism, anticolonialism, *and* anticapitalism, often inhibits much more than it inspires revolutionary anti-imperialist movements (see Bogues, 1983, 2003; Marable, 1996; C. W. Mills, 1987, 2003a; Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2009; C. J. Robinson, 2000, 2001).

Sartre quickly collapses Negritude (and, in some senses, Pan-Africanism and black nationalism) into Marxism before he has a good understanding of *what* Negritude is, *why* it was created, and *what* it was created to do. As soon as black radicalism conceptually outdistances white radicalism, which, of course, has long been embodied in Marxism, Sartre counsels blacks to take a hard turn toward a weak-willed, class-focused, and economy-obsessed

humanism and transcend their newly discovered radical blackness or racial particularity. By Sartre's own admission, the revolutionary Negritudists had surely put the white Surrealists to shame, making a mockery of the "emptiness," the "verbal impotence," and the "silent densities" of their, the white Surrealists, poetry (Sartre, 2001, p. 122). But, even in winning, blacks still lose. If they embrace their "race," which is to say their "blackness," in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world, then, they are accused of narrow-minded nationalism or, worse, "reverse racism." However, if on the other hand, they reject race, then it is automatically assumed that they want to be white. Extremely frustrated by Sartre's redefinition and retheorization of Negritude, Fanon declared: "Every hand was a losing hand for me."

Sartre was dead serious when he wrote of "the *moment* of separation or negativity" that Negritude represented. A "moment" is a very brief period of time, and that is precisely how long Sartre envisioned blacks' dire need to speak their special truths to each other, whites, and the wider world about their collective lived-experiences and lived-endurances in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. In so many words, Sartre was saying that blacks were justified in their deep desire to separate from and/or critique white supremacy and European global imperialism, but just as soon as he admits this, he sets a time limit on how long blacks should journey down the road of racial justice. Fanon questioned Sartre's attempt to place a time limit on blacks' *need* to explore their blackness on their own terms and their *need* to demand racial justice from the purveyors and progeny of white supremacy. From his point of view, Jean-Paul Sartre had "destroyed black zeal" by not realizing that blacks "needed to lose [themselves] completely in Negritude." If Negritude turned out to be, in fact, a "passage and not an outcome, a means and not an ultimate end," it was not Sartre's place to say so, Fanon chided. Could Sartre not see how condescending and paternalistic what he was arguing was to blacks? And, if he could not see it, then, for Fanon, that very racial myopia was proof-positive that, no matter how well-meaning, Sartre had done a great disservice to blacks in their quest to rescue, reclaim and, if need be, re-create their humble humanity. Fanon fumed: "I *needed* not to know. This struggle, this decline had to take on an aspect of completeness." Hence, even if Negritude was purely a "passage," Sartre failed to fully acknowledge, critically understand, and be solemnly sensitive to the necessity of that "passage" and its crucial importance in terms of blacks' efforts to reclaim their humanity and embrace and practice revolutionary blackness and revolutionary humanism.

Negritude is, indeed, an "antiracist racism" from the Sartrean perspective, but "this antiracist racism is the only road that will lead to the abolition of racial differences" (p. 118). Even as they embrace race in a revolutionary antiracist manner, in the interest of a revolutionary antiracist movement, the racially ruled are simultaneously told by the progeny of the inventors of

race, the modern racial rulers, to transcend race, to erase race, to deal it the final deathblow. From Sartre's point of view, then, Negritude is temporary and, like a child throwing a temper tantrum, it should be tolerated for the time being; but rest assured, racial-colonial rulers, it cannot and will not last long. In his own existential phenomenological paternalistic words,

Negritude is not a state, it is a simple surpassing of itself, it is love. It is when Negritude renounces itself that it finds itself; it is when it accepts losing that it has won: the colored man—and he alone—can be asked to renounce the pride of his color. He is the one who is walking on this ridge between past particularism—which he has just climbed—and future universalism, which will be the twilight of his Negritude; he is the one who looks to the end of particularism in order to find the dawn of the universal. Undoubtedly, the white worker also becomes conscious of his class in order to deny it, since he wants the advent of a classless society: but once again, the definition of class is objective; it sums up only the conditions of the white worker's alienation; whereas it is in the bottom of his heart that the black finds race, and he must tear out his heart. (p. 138)

In Negritude, continental and diasporan Africans are simultaneously issued a long-overdue special invitation to rescue, reclaim, and, perhaps, modernize African culture, and, almost immediately, admonished to transcend their newfound (or newly created) culture for the greater good, not of humanity, as Sartre would slyly have us believe, but for white workers. Note that blacks "find" race, not in the antiblack racist and white supremacist world they are mercilessly and maliciously flung into, but "in the bottom of [their] heart[s]" and they, therefore, "must tear out [their] heart[s]." Why? Because the most pressing social and political problems are capitalism and class struggle; the very problems that white Marxists have long been perplexingly preoccupied with. Sartre tells us that white workers want a "classless society," however he does not extend his analysis to black and other colored and racially colonized workers who want not only a "classless society," but an antiracist, dare I say, post-white supremacist society as well. If, indeed, race is in blacks' hearts, as Sartre suggests, then, pray tell, how did it get there? What is the relationship between racism and capitalism? Racism and colonialism? And, furthermore, colonialism and capitalism? Is it a coincidence that the rise of race and racism parallels the historical development of capitalism and racial colonialism? Who invented racial categories? When, where, and why were racial categories invented and disparaging racial distinctions made? Cesairean and Senghorian Negritude offer answers—dissimilar answers, but answers nonetheless—to these questions (i.e., the "race question"). Sartrean Negritude sidesteps answering these crucial questions altogether and makes a mad dash to desultorily dissolve Negritude into Marxism.

Sartre, however, is correct to suggest that Negritude contains the seeds of revolutionary humanism—one need only turn to Fanon's four volumes to see the fruits of Negritude's nascent revolutionary humanism pushed to their pinnacle—but, Sartre is wrong, retrogressively wrong, to euphemize the importance of Pan-Africanism and black nationalism for black radical politics and black revolutionary social movements. He is on point when and where he states that the "black revolutionary . . . asserts his solidarity with the oppressed of every color," and "because he has suffered from capitalistic exploitation more than all others, he [the black revolutionary] has acquired a sense of revolt and a love of liberty more than all others. And because he is *the most oppressed*, he necessarily pursues the liberation of all, when he works for his own deliverance" (pp. 126, 136–137, emphasis in original). However, Sartre fails to see *how* and *why* the black liberation struggle, of which Negritude is an important although often overlooked part, fuels the fires of both revolutionary blackness *and* revolutionary humanism, and not simply in blacks but in other nonwhites *and* authentic white antiracist allies as well.

If black revolutionaries are "pursu[ing] the liberation of all," even as they embrace their blackness, then the problem is not with blackness, but more, perhaps, with the ways in which blackness is maliciously misrepresented and deliberately devalued in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world. Sartre, perhaps, should be admonishing whites, especially white Marxists and white liberals, to renounce their race (or, rather, their sense of racelessness, or racial neutrality, or racial universality), since historically when whites embrace their race, it has usually translated into racism, white supremacy in particular, and the physical and cultural decimation and/or racial colonization of nonwhites. Sartre is in very "bad faith"—to borrow one of his favorite existential phenomenological phrases—when he suggests that black revolutionaries transcend race in their efforts to abolish racism without so much as mentioning that whites, especially white workers, white Marxists, and other white leftists, would do well (finally they would do right morally and ethically) in doing the same. We seem to have stumbled upon a Sartrean double standard here; a racial riddle, or a racial colonial conundrum, if you will.

The "abolition of racial differences" is not or, rather, should not be quarantined to blacks, black revolutionaries, and/or black revolutionary movements, but should be incorporated into all anti-imperialist movements, especially white Marxist and white leftist movements. It is quite cowardly, if not subtly racist, of Sartre and other white Marxists to nobly volunteer to fight in the war against capitalism and entreat and enlist black revolutionaries in class struggle (often as the "shook troops," as Du Bois declared in "The Negro and Communism"), and then abandon blacks and other nonwhites in their parlous struggle(s) against antiblack racism and

white supremacy (Du Bois, 1995b, p. 591; see also Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2010). Insult is added to the injury when many white Marxists and white leftists refuse to acknowledge the ways that they themselves are complicit in and contribute to antiblack racism and white supremacy by downplaying and neglecting the ways in which racism, colonialism, *and* capitalism are incessantly overlapping, interlocking and intersecting systems of violence, oppression, and exploitation that thrice threaten nonwhites' life-worlds and life-struggles.

It seems utterly absurd that an extremely perceptive philosopher and radical social theorist such as Jean-Paul Sartre would double-deal the Negritude theorists, and blacks in general, at the very moment that they turned to him for camaraderie. However, in Sartre's (2001) defense it could be pointed out that he did earnestly admit in the middle of "Black Orpheus": "It must first be stated that a white man could hardly speak about it [Negritude] suitably, since he had no inner experience of it and since European languages lack words to describe it" (p. 129). If, indeed, "a white man could hardly speak about it suitably," then, why did Sartre suggest over and over again throughout "Black Orpheus" that Negritude was fleeting, momentary, and/or temporary? On what grounds did he make these audacious assertions, and why? What is more, why was Sartre so eager to suggest that the Negritude theorists, and black revolutionaries in general, transcend their blackness, their "past particularism" for a "future universalism" without at the same time issuing a similar caveat to white Marxists and other white leftists, if not whites in general? Sartre knows good and well that the black revolutionary "wishes in no way to dominate the world: he desires the abolition of ethnic privileges, wherever they come from" (p. 137). So, it seems curious that he would prematurely eulogize Negritude and eloquently write its epitaph. Perhaps there is a deep double meaning, dare I say a deep *Sartrean double consciousness*, when he writes near the end of "Black Orpheus": "One more step and Negritude will disappear completely" (p. 138).

Negritude did not disappear as much as it evolved into more radical forms of blackness, forms of blackness which have been and remain almost utterly overlooked by liberal and well-intentioned white intellectuals and would-be white antiracist allies, many of whom continue to be confused when and where black radicals and black revolutionaries attach urgent importance to a principled embrace of blackness—what I have dubbed here, *revolutionary blackness*. Sartre misunderstood blacks' need to explore *their* blackness, as opposed to whites'—whether conscious or unconscious—antiblack racist constructions of blackness. Part of Sartre's misunderstanding of blackness, Fanon suggested, had to do with his unwillingness, at the time that he wrote "Black Orpheus" in 1948, to critically engage whiteness and white supremacy, especially amongst would-be white antiracist allies, white liberals, white workers, white Marxists, and other white leftists. Sartre

understood that there was a connection between whiteness and blackness, but he did not critically comprehend that it would be almost impossible for blacks to transcend their blackness without whites, too, transcending their whiteness and working with nonwhites to eradicate white supremacy. This line of logic has even more weight and gravity when it is recalled that whites invented the concept of race and perfected the practices of racism and racial colonialism (see Goldberg, 1990, 1993, 2001, 2008; Gossett, 1997; Gregory and Sanjek, 1994; Hannaford, 1996; Smedley, 2007). The foregoing provides a portrait of Fanon's main problem with Sartre's redefinition and retheorization of Negritude. From Fanon's point of view, Negritude was not born only to *die* as much as it was born only to be *reborn* or, rather, *reincarnated* in another, more revolutionary form. It was, therefore, created to be re-created into new, more radical, and, ultimately, more revolutionary forms of blackness.

There will be a need for revolutionary blackness, so long as there is antiblack racism and white supremacy, and there will be a need to seriously study and explore the lived-experiences and lived-endurances of blacks, so long as there remains racial colonialism, liberal racism, and white supremacy (see Back and Solomos, 2000; Bulmer and Solomos, 1999a, 2004; Essed and Goldberg, 2001; Goldberg, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2008; Goldberg and Solomos, 2002). As Fanon (1967) said, "The Negro problem does not resolve itself into the problem of Negroes living among white men but rather of Negroes exploited, enslaved, despised by a colonialist, capitalist society that is only accidentally white" (p. 202). Whether we agree or disagree with Fanon that the racial-colonial-capitalist society which we find ourselves in is "only accidentally white" is beside the point. The point is that whether "only accidentally white" or deliberately white the only world that we know and experience is an antiblack racist and white supremacist world, which unequivocally is a racial colonial world where whites are the racial colonizers and nonwhites are the racially colonized. Let us, therefore, turn to Fanon's critique of racial colonialism and witness white supremacy at work in the racial colonial world.

## NOTES

1. For further discussion of Sartre's concept of "committed literature," please see Sartre (1988), as well as the seminal secondary sources on his concept of "committed literature": Goldthorpe (1984), C. G. Hill (1992), Hollier (1986), Wilcocks (1988), and P. R. Wood (1990).

2. For further discussion of Africana studies' emphasis on interdisciplinarity and critique of traditional disciplines' monodisciplinarity, see Asante and Karenga (2006); Bobo and Michel (2000); Bobo, Hudley, and Michel (2004); Gordon and

Gordon (2006a, 2006b); and Marable (2000, 2005). As was observed in the introduction, my conception of Africana studies critically builds on and goes far beyond conventional conceptions of Africana studies and argues, ultimately, that it is more appropriately comprehended as a *transdisciplinary human science* (see Rabaka 2006a, 2006b, 2007b, 2008a, 2009).

3. The discourse on Fanon's utilization and critiques of Negritude, existential phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and, later, Marxism is fairly developed and constitutes a major area of critical inquiry within Fanon studies. Here I am not so much interested in *which* theories Fanon used as much as I am in *how* he used them and for *what* purposes. Keeping this in mind, my analysis here has benefited most from: Alessandrini (1999); Bulhan (1985); Cauter (1970); Gendzier (1973); Gibson (1999e, 2003); Gordon (1995b); Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White (1996); Perinbam (1982); Read (1996); and Sekyi-Otu (1996).

4. Fanon's critique of Eurocentric methods, especially in the social sciences, prefigured and provided a paradigm for recent discussions concerning decolonizing methods, see Gunaratnam (2003), Sandoval (2000), and L. T. Smith (1999).

5. Throughout the remainder of this section I juxtapose Fanon and Baldwin's critiques of antiblack racism and white supremacy. I have cited the works in Fanon studies I have utilized within the text and in the preceding endnotes. In terms of the seminal sources in Baldwin studies I drew from to develop my interpretation of James Baldwin's social, political, and racial theories, see Baldwin (1961, 1963, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1976, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1989, 1998, 2000, 2004), Balfour (2001), Bloom (2007), T. Harris (1996), King and Scott (2006), Kinnamon (1974), D. McBride (1999), D. Q. Miller (2000), O'Daniel (1977), H. Porter (1989), Standley (1988), Standley and Pratt (1989), and Troupe (1989).

6. My interpretations of antiblack racism and bad faith have, of course, been influenced by the work of the Caribbean American philosopher Lewis Gordon, whose groundbreaking *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism* (1995a) remains the seminal work on the subject. He identified the central tenets of bad faith by stating: "The core assumptions of bad faith are that human beings are aware, no matter how fugitive that awareness may be, of their freedom in their various situations, that they are free choosers of various aspects of their situations, that they are consequently responsible for their conditions on some level, that they have the power to change at least themselves through coming to grips with their situations, and that there exist features of their condition which provide rich areas of interpretive investigation for the analyst or interpreter" (p. 5). In engaging antiblack racism as a form of bad faith, Gordon had this to say: "Bad faith thus, from the outset, holds a unique relation to the question of antiblack racism in the following way. From the Sartrean perspective, we seek our identity by way of negating or 'freezing' that of others. But in this process we lie to ourselves with the notion of being at one with our various identities. Thus, we often identify ourselves as 'full' and others as 'empty' or existing in the condition of lack. This condition of lack often takes on group associations, which leads to the dichotomy of fullness and hunger having symbolic form in antiblack societies as lightness and darkness, whiteness and blackness, which in turn eventually takes on racial form as the white and the black. Bad faith can hence also be shown to be an effort to deny the blackness within by way of asserting the

supremacy of whiteness. It can be regarded as an effort to purge blackness from the self and the world, symbolically and literally" (p. 6). This means that just as it is possible for blacks to lie to themselves, then, bad faith is not simply a Sartrean concept applicable to whites only, but that it is possible for blacks to practice a form of bad faith by internalizing and practicing antiblack racism. This is, also, why it is crucial for blacks to reject *reactionary blackness*, which is a form of antiblack racist bad faith, and embrace and practice a principled *revolutionary blackness*. For more of Gordon's work on bad faith and antiblack racism, see also Gordon (1993, 1995c, 2002).

7. Nat Turner's life and legacy continue to receive scholarly attention, and he remains, at least in my mind, one of the most Fanonian figures in African American history in the nineteenth century. Almost one hundred years before both Fanon and Baldwin were born, Turner argued for the redemptive and retributive power of violence against exploitation, oppression, racial colonization, and white supremacy. The most noteworthy works on this extremely important figure are: J. T. Baker (1998), Clarke (1968), Duffy (1971), Foner (1971), French (2004), Greenberg (1996), Oates (1975), Stone (1992), and, of course, Styron (1967). I briefly touch on the Mau Mau movement in "form" 5 of the present volume, "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism."

8. The works of Winthrop Jordan (1974, 1977) and George Fredrickson (1987) continue to provide some of the best historical overviews of blackness in the white imagination. However, because Jan Pieterse (1992) provided historical and contemporary visuals of the ways in which blackness is represented and misrepresented in the white imagination, his work is noteworthy here as well.

9. My emphasis here on "relearning to love" has been profoundly influenced by, of course, Fanon, but also by the more recent meditations on love and radical humanism put forward by bell hooks (2000c, 2001, 2002, 2007). In her pivotal essay, "Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History: What's Love Got to Do with It?" hooks (1996b) revealingly wrote of Fanon's influence on her conceptions of love-inspired critique and decolonization: "Working with Fanon's writing in the formative stages of my political development, I was given by this intellectual parent paradigms that enabled me to understand the many ways in which systems of domination damage the colonized. More than any other thinker, he provided me with a model for insurgent black intellectual life that has shaped my work. He taught me the importance of vigilant interrogation. Certainly I took him at his word when he passionately declared: 'Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the *You*? At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness. My final prayer: O my body make me always a man who questions!' In becoming a woman who questions, I found feminist thinking transformed my understanding of the work of Fanon. I returned to him through my embrace of both mother and father; through a recognition of their mutual presence within me. It is a return to love" (p. 85). There is, then, an intellectual affinity, a critical theoretical connection between Fanon and hooks, one that is premised on love, decolonization, radical humanism, and constructive criticism of, not simply antiblack racism and white supremacy, but also black males' sexism against black women, in particular, and their pretensions to patriarchy, in general.

10. These are serious questions, and several works in critical white studies seek to provide crucial answers—for example, see T. W. Allen (1994, 1997), Babb (1998),



Baum (2006), Dyer (1997), Frankenberg (1997), Garner (2007), M. Hill (1997, 2004), Kendall (2006), Levine-Rasky (2002), Lopez (2005), Nakayama and Martin (1999), B. B. Rasmussen (2001), Roediger (1994, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2007), Sullivan (2006), Ware and Back (2002), and Yancy (2005, 2008). My previous contributions to this important area of critical inquiry may be found in Rabaka (2006d, 2007a, 2007b, 2010).

11. This, as is well known, is one of the major motifs of critical white studies, and particularly the work of T. W. Allen (1994, 1997), Bonilla-Silva (2001, 2003), Bonilla-Silva and Doane (2003), M. K. Brown (2003), Roediger (1994, 1998, 2005, 2007), and R. J. Young (1990). For further discussion of whites' long-lost humanity, see "form" 5, "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism," of the present volume.

12. In "The White Man's Guilt," originally published in *Ebony* in 1965, James Baldwin (1985a) agonizingly admitted: "I have known many black men and women and black boys and girls who really believed that it was better to be white than black; whose lives were ruined or ended by this belief; and I, myself, carried the seeds of this destruction within me for a long time" (p. 411). Therefore, we witness, again, the overlapping nature of Fanon and Baldwin's critiques of antiblack racism and the diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black inferiority. Further discussion of the conceptual connections between Baldwin and Fanon studies is provided below.

13. When asked the questions, "Does the concept of God mean something to you? Are you a believer in any sense, or not?" Baldwin (1989) revealingly responded: "I'm not a believer in any sense which would make sense to any church, and any church would obviously throw me out. I believe—what do I believe? I believe in . . . I believe in love . . . I believe we can save each other. In fact, I think we must save each other. I don't depend on anyone else to do it" (p. 48). He went on to sagaciously say, "I don't mean anything passive. I mean something active, something more like a fire, like the wind, something which can change you. I mean energy. I mean passionate belief, a passionate knowledge of what a human being can do, and become, what a human being can do to change the world in which he finds himself" (p. 48). Here is Baldwin's homespun revolutionary humanism cast in bold relief. His hinting at "something active," as opposed to something "passive"; his emphasis on "energy," "passionate belief," and "passionate knowledge"; and, finally, his highlighting of "what a human being can do, and become," as well as "what a human being can do to change the world" irrefutably accents his often-overlooked revolutionary humanism and helps to corroborate my contention that Baldwin and Fanon's work amazingly seems to discursively dovetail and take parallel paths from radical antiracist activism and redemptive anger to revolutionary humanism and relearning to love (see also Baldwin, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1989, 1998; Balfour 2001).

14. In "Sartre on American Racism," feminist philosopher Julien Murphy (2002) quickly challenges what could be interpreted as Young, among others', over-exaggeration of Sartre's contributions to anticolonialism and antiracism, sternly stating: "While Sartre took up the topic of American racism in the late 1940s as part of his responsibility to speak out against injustice in his writing, he did not give it the sort of attention that it deserved. There is no sustained analysis of American racism like that of anti-Semitism found in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, also published in 1946. It is

somewhat disheartening to know that, while it is in this period that America figured most prominently in his work (he also published work by Richard Wright in his journal *Les Temps Modernes* [1946], and the same year devoted a special issue of the journal to the United States), his writings on race are scant and largely undeveloped. His piece on revolutionary violence is unfinished and was posthumously published as an Appendix to his *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1992). There is hardly any mention of racism in his other writings about America that he published during this time. There is no record of his public criticism apart from his newspaper pieces for the French press that, despite Sartre's growing popularity in America, were largely ignored by the American press. Although well known, his play [*The Respectful Prostitute*] is short, not regarded as particularly well written, and seldom performed after its initial debut; it became his public statement for Americans on racism. Little wonder that scholars have largely ignored Sartre's responses to American racism during the late 1940s" (p. 223; see also Judaken, 2008; Sartre, 1989). As much as I intellectually admire and adore Sartre (and, believe me, I sincerely do), I must admit that Murphy is onto something; something that has seemed to slip by more than a few fine Sartre studies scholars, philosophers of race, and postcolonial theorists. Sartre seems to have taken a token or cosmetic approach to antiblack racism, one where it is treated aesthetically (i.e., in a play, *The Respectful Prostitute*), although never to the critical depth and detail that he devoted to anti-Semitism or, later, capitalism. Because he left his thoughts on antiblack racism undeveloped or, at best, severely underdeveloped, much of what he said in interviews and wrote about colonialism failed to critically grasp and grapple with the fact that even the weakest form of Negritude, say for instance Senghorian Negritude, advanced that the kind of colonialism blacks endured was best characterized by the designation "racial colonialism." Without critically engaging antiblack racism how could Sartre possibly understand and, with a clear conscience, write about the lived-experiences and lived-endurances of blacks in *racial* colonial societies? This question, of course, could and *should* be extended to include the lived-experiences and lived-endurances of blacks in racist capitalist societies as well (see form 3, "Marxist Fanonism," in the present volume). Sartre, however inadvertently, may have done (and, from Fanon's critical perspective Sartre, indeed, *did*) blacks a great disservice by capriciously critiquing antiblack racism between 1946 and 1947, but never putting forward a full-fledged philosophy of race and philosophy of history that seriously wrestled with the overlapping, interlocking and intersecting nature of racism, colonialism and capitalism. From Fanon's point of view, it is not enough for white left-liberals to say that they are antiracist and anticolonialist, their thought and behavior—and if they are one of the premier philosophers of their generation, then, their philosophy and publications—should in some serious and sustained way critically reflect their commitments to antiracism and anticolonialism. Fanon's critique of Sartre's redefinition and retheorization of Negritude, and in several senses Sartre's redefinition and retheorization of "blackness," is elaborated in critical detail in the succeeding paragraphs of the text and, therefore, need not be developed any further for the time being.

15. The intellectual history-making exchanges between Sartre and the Negritude theorists and, later, Fanon's critique of Sartre's redefinition and retheorization of Negritude are fairly developed in Fanon studies. However, interpretations of these intellectual episodes are very varied. On one side there are Fanon studies scholars,

such as Gendzier (1973) and Macey (2000), who seem to side with Fanon's critique of Sartrean Negritude. Then, on the other side, there are Fanon studies scholars, such as Caute (1970) and McCulloch (1983a), who argue that ultimately Fanon digested the Sartrean dialectic and "accepted the dialectical significance of Negritude" (McCulloch, 1983a, p. 53). In what follows we will see that Sartre seems to have engaged Negritude from a subtle antiblack racist and paternalist perspective in his efforts to make it coincide with Hegelian dialectics. Fanon's problem with Sartre's Hegelization of Negritude revolves around the inherent Eurocentrism of such an approach to Negritude and the ways in which a Hegelian interpretation of Negritude ultimately alters, not only the essence of Negritude, but also its basic aims and end goal. For all the criticisms that many Fanon scholars have correctly leveled against Gendzier's work, on this issue it is, for the most part, on point. She shrewdly asserted: "While Sartre acknowledged that Negritude was a necessary phase in the self-consciousness of black men, he proceeded to elaborate on his own conception of African civilization in a way that may not have been identical with the views held by the exponents of Negritude. . . . Sartre was sympathetic to Negritude, of that there is no doubt. But he was uncertain as to precisely what the movement was about; he suggested that it may not have been clear to its followers either. . . . Some felt that he did not adequately comprehend the need for an African cultural awakening, and that he mistook a moment in a dialectic for what, in fact, was the revival of African civilization. Others felt that he overlooked the revolutionary character of this specifically African movement, insisting that it merge with the struggle of the world proletariat" (Gendzier, 1973, pp. 37–38). What seems to be at the heart of Fanon's critique of Sartre's Hegelization of Negritude is the simple, but often overlooked fact that "specifically African [intellectual and political] movement[s]" should, first and foremost, be critically engaged from perspectives grounded in African intellectual and sociopolitical history. The Negritude movement was a matter of black intellectual life or death, and Fanon felt that Sartre did not approach it with the seriousness with which it deserved and blacks' dire situation in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world demanded. Sartre's conception of Negritude emphasized the universal over the particular without really understanding the importance of the particular, of specificity for a group who had historically been denied their individuality, their unique historical and cultural personality and, what is worse, they were denied all of this by the very philosopher's philosophy of history that he, Sartre, was trying so obstinately to force their Negritude into: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Macey (2000) importantly muses on this contradiction in Sartre's conception of Negritude: "In describing Negritude as a temporary 'racist anti-racism' that will be transcended by the dialectic of history, Sartre falls into a trap of his own making, and he describes that very trap in his *Refléxions [sur la question juive]* when he speaks of the 'democrat's' inability to recognize the Jew in the assertion of his Jewishness and his insistence on the need to recognize his as a universal (and 'democrat' was not a positive term for the Sartre of the late 1940s, who used it to mean 'woolly liberal'). Both Jewishness and Negritude must be transcended by the entry into universalism. Whilst the trap can be described in purely Sartrean terms, it also relates to other questions. On the one hand, Hegel's elision or eviction of Africa from history in his quintessentially Eurocentric history of Spirit's journey from East to West; on the other, the universalism of a French Republicanism that recognizes—or calls into

existence—abstract subjects who are French, but neither black nor white, Jewish or gentile, male or female” (p. 187). Observe that both of the “universalisms” that Macey mentions are actually Eurocentric “universalisms,” which means that they are not “universalisms,” in any authentically revolutionary humanist sense of the word, at all, but more racially colonized conceptions of the “universal.” This is “the trap” or, rather, the bad faith that Sartre fell into in his redefinition and retheorization of Negritude. In what follows, the intention is to carefully and critically demonstrate that Sartre’s initial intentions toward, and ultimately what he ended up arguing about Negritude provides contemporary critical theorists, especially critical race theorists, with an important paradigmatic example of the ways in which Fanon’s critiques of blackness, whiteness, and liberal racism remain relevant.

16. For more on Fanon’s critique of Hegel and Marx, see “The Negro and Hegel” (Fanon, 1967, pp. 216–222). And, for some of the best secondary sources on Fanon’s critique of Hegel and Marx, see Ayalew (1975), T. Martin (1999), Monahan (2003), Sekyi-Otu (1996), L. Turner (1989, 1996), and L. Turner and Alan (1999). Further discussion of Fanon’s conceptual connections to Marxism is provided in form 3, “Marxist Fanonism,” in the present volume.

17. Fanon’s conception of the racial-colonial-capitalist world as a Manichaeian world should be strongly stressed because it represents a major leitmotif throughout his corpus. Several Fanon scholars have critically engaged this theme in Fanon’s discourse, but it was the work of Lewis Gordon (1995b), Ato Sekyi-Otu (1996), and, more recently, Nigel Gibson (2003) that went furthest in demystifying Manichaeism. Gibson (2003) importantly asserted: “Colonial society appears as a Manichaeian one, whose superstructure is its substructure. It is a society of either-or, of radical polarities that badly assert that simply belonging to one race determines your place in the society. Its reality and its ideology are reflections of an inverted world: the colonizer represents everything good, human, and alive; the colonized all that is bad, brutish, and inert” (p. 107). From Fanon’s point of view, Sartre misunderstood Negritude because he neglected to see Africans on their own terms, as agents of change and actors and actresses in their own ever-unfolding historical and herstorical drama(s). In employing the Hegelian dialectic to explain and retheorize Negritude, Sartre could only see Africans as “blacks” and “slaves” (or, perhaps more politely and politically correct, “former-slaves”), because in that dialectic they are supposedly the opposite of “whites” and “masters,” the opposite of the racial-colonial-capitalist rulers of the white supremacist world. David Caute (1970) succinctly captured Sartre’s application of the Hegelian dialectic to Negritude: “The affirmation of white supremacy provides the thesis; Negritude as an authentic value was the moment of negativity; the creation of a humanity without ‘races’ would be the synthesis” (p. 23). Fanon argued that because Sartre (as with the majority of whites, whether conservative or liberal) so profoundly misunderstood Negritude, because he did not approach Negritude from a revolutionary antiracist perspective, which would have enabled him to revolutionize and develop a real relationship with Africana history, culture, philosophy, and struggle, what Sartre actually sought to synthesize was white supremacy with whites’ own antiblack racist conceptions and social constructions of blackness. Real blacks and their blackness or, rather, authentic Africans and their Africanity remain unknown, invisible, and anonymous in Sartre’s Hegelization of Negritude. Gibson (2003) helps to drive this point home:

"Manichaeism is the form colonial relations take. It allows no perspective beyond the zones delimited by colonialism. The settler creates the native but also creates the Black skin in a White mask, representing a pseudo-synthesis of colonized and colonizer, which Fanon believes only serves to reinforce the colonial world. The only authentic way out of this bipartite world is not through synthesis but by negation expressed in the colonialist's own form—that is, through violence" (p. 114). Fanon, therefore, rejects "synthesis" as the ultimate outcome of Sartrean Negritude because it is a Negritude predicated on a mutated and muted Manichaeism—which is to say that ultimately Sartrean Negritude, similar to Senghorian Negritude, is a *Manichaean Negritude* that recolonizes and blocks blacks from ultimately achieving both revolutionary blackness and revolutionary humanism.

18. For further discussion of the connections between Pan-Africanism, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Negritude movement, see Ako (1982), Bamikunle (1982), Fabre (1993), as well as more recent research by Archer-Straw (2000), Cazenave (2005), Irele (2004), Jules-Rosette (1998), and Rabaka (2009).



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## Decolonialist Fanonism

### Fanon's Critical Theory of White Supremacist Colonialism: From Radical Disalienation to Revolutionary Decolonization

I come back once more to Césaire . . .  
I feel that I can still hear Césaire . . .  
Once again I come back to Césaire; I wish that many black intellectuals  
would turn to him for their inspiration.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (pp. 90, 187)

Fanon's pronouncements are underwritten by the spectre of Negritude.

—Ato Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (p. 44)

The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves. The immobility to which the native is condemned can only be called into question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonization—the history of pillage—and bring into existence the history of the nation—the history of decolonization.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (p. 51)

**"DIRTY NIGGERS!" IN "CULTURAL DESOLATION":  
FANON, CESAIRE, AND (DIS)CONTINUITY IN  
THE DISCOURSE ON DECOLONIZATION**

Preceding Fanon, one of the early decolonialists and, perhaps, his greatest (single) Africana influence, particularly with regard to the concept of decolonization, was the Martiniquan poet, radical politician, and critical social theorist of Negritude, Aime Césaire.<sup>1</sup> Césaire's influence on Fanon is, quite simply, immeasurable and, seemingly, ubiquitous throughout his corpus. Fanon's earliest postwar political activities can be linked to Césaire and, as the highly-regarded Ghanaian political scientist Emmanuel Hansen (1977) noted in his groundbreaking study, *Frantz Fanon: Social and Political Thought*, though "[t]here is no evidence that Fanon was at this time [1946] sympathetic to the Communist cause. He was more interested in the cultural nationalism of Césaire. His participation in the campaign activities of Aime Césaire was very instructive" (p. 27). Further exploring Fanon's intellectual and political relationship with Césaire, the French intellectual historian, David Caute (1970), contends, "Fanon took his . . . lead from Césaire" (p. 15). Caute continues: "Fanon's first debt was to Aime Césaire, and particularly to his masterpieces *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* [*Return to My Native Land*] and *Discours sur le colonialisme* [*Discourse on Colonialism*]. In Fanon's view, Césaire had virtually single-handedly fostered the spirit of black pride in the people of the Antilles" (pp. 17–18).

Fanon, as anyone who has ever perused the pages of *Black Skin, White Masks* shall surely tell you, was extremely enamored with Césaire. So much so, that he bemoaned the fact that more intellectuals of African descent did not "turn to him [Césaire] for their inspiration" (Fanon, 1967, p. 187). Césaire, in many senses, provided Fanon with an anomalous anticolonial political education that would, by the time of the writing of *The Wretched of the Earth*, translate itself into a full-blown *praxis-promoting critical theory of decolonization*. Besides and, to a certain extent, beyond literally providing Fanon with political education—no matter how flawed upon critical reflection<sup>2</sup>—Césaire contributed the concept of black consciousness (or, "black pride," as Caute would have it) to Fanon's critical theory of the racial colonial world. This "spirit of black pride" that Césaire is reported to have fostered in Antilleans has been commented upon by several of Fanon's biographers as having a life-altering effect on him and his thinking.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned earlier, Fanon's crucial years between his discharge from the French army and his higher education in France were both intellectually and politically pivotal, and Césaire's centrality during this period of his development cannot be overstated.



Fanon did not merely engage the thoughts and texts of Césaire. By no means, he, Fanon, ever the radical willing unerringly to act on his ideas and couple his passion with politics, participated—at the behest of his elder brother, Joby—in Césaire's 1946 campaign, under the auspices of the French Communist Party, for the Prime Ministership of Martinique (see J. Fanon, 2004). In *Fanon: The Revolutionary as Prophet*, Peter Geismar (1971), one of Fanon's first critical biographers, revealingly wrote:

Frantz and Joby Fanon based their hopes for a better society on Aime Césaire, [then] running as the Communist Party's parliamentary candidate from Martinique in the first election of the Fourth Republic. . . . Césaire had been at the head of a group of intellectual refugees from the Antilles who put out their own review in Paris, *Legitime Defense*, with articles dissecting all aspects of Caribbean colonial society. Earlier than Fanon, he despaired of these islands where the blacks treated each other as "dirty niggers." Martinique, he said, was the bastard of Europe and Africa, dripping with self-hatred. Yet he returned—to seek a political solution to the cultural desolation. The Communists, Césaire felt, could begin to renovate Martinique's economic infrastructure; a more healthy society might develop. . . . That Frantz Fanon worked for Césaire's election in 1946 indicates not that the former was a confirmed Marxist at this early time [Fanon was but twenty-one years old], or a revolutionary, but only that Fanon felt that things were not quite as perfect as they might be within the French Republic, or in Martinique. Still, this first political endeavor was instructive; he began to think about the mechanics of social change. . . . The 1946 excursion, which had originally been planned so that they could listen to the fine oratory of Césaire, and aid him when possible, led to quite different patterns of thought. (pp. 40–41)<sup>4</sup>

Geismar relates that Césaire—and this should be emphasized—sought "a political solution" to the Antillean problems of "dirty nigger[hood]" and "cultural desolation."<sup>5</sup> Césaire was not merely a "theorist," or some sort of armchair revolutionary promoting Negritude and a new black consciousness. Much more, he was one of its greatest practitioners. Negritude, as too few academics and activists have acknowledged, was not simply a theory of "return," or cultural recuperation, or "nativism," as some have consistently charged (Anise, 1974; Bastide, 1961; Beier, 1959; Berrian and Long, 1967; Blair, 1966; E. A. Jones, 1971; Melone, 1963). Quite the contrary, Negritude, in the heads, hearts, and hands of Aime Césaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor, and Leon Damas, was a *theory* that encompassed and engaged "trans-African" aesthetics, politics, economics, history, psychology, culture, philosophy, and society (Berrian and Long, 1967; Cismaru, 1974; Finn, 1988; Gonzales-Cruz, 1979; E. A. Jones, 1971; Kennedy, 1990; Kesteloot, 1991; Lagneau, 1961; C. L. Miller, 1990; Rabaka, 2009; N. R. Shapiro, 1970; Simon, 1963; Tomich, 1979; Wauthier, 1967). Negritude

was a theory that promoted *praxis* toward the end of transforming the aforementioned aspects of African life-worlds in the best interests of persons of African descent in their specific colonial, neocolonial, and/or postcolonial settings, circumstances, or situations (Irele, 1970, 1977). Negritude, and it perhaps would be hard to overstate it, was the very foundation upon which Frantz Fanon developed his discourse on decolonization (Caute, 1970, pp. 17–28; Gendzier, 1973, pp. 36–44; Macey, 2000, pp. 127–132, 177–186; Zahar, 1974, pp. 60–73). However, even at this early age, at twenty-one, Fanon was not an uncritical disciple of Cesairean Negritude.

It was Joby, Fanon's elder brother, who awakened him to the weaknesses of Cesaire's campaign by emphasizing the problems and serious pitfalls of social and political mobilization on a racial colonial island such as Martinique. According to Joby, the major flaw of Cesaire's campaign was that "he never succeeded in reaching the peasants and the countryside" (E. Hansen, 1977, p. 27). Cesaire's cultural nationalism smacked of the very vanguardism and top-down tactics of continental African colonial aristocrats and bourgeois bureaucrats that Fanon would take to task several years later in *The Wretched of the Earth*. What is important here to observe is that it was Joby, not Frantz, who insisted on the peasantry's involvement in Martiniquan politics. He accented the irony of a militant black Marxist such as Cesaire overlooking, perhaps, the most downtrodden on the island, the racially colonized peasantry and rural folk, all the while espousing communism, worker's rights, and radical economic reform. As will be discussed in greater detail in the ensuing "form," "Marxist Fanonism," by the time he wrote *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon's concept of decolonization included not only the racially colonized proletariat but also the racially colonized lumpenproletariat, the "landless peasant[s]," and the "mass of the country people" (Fanon, 1968, pp. 44, 80, 111). Here, we can see that even from his first exposure to Cesairean Negritude Fanon developed a dialectical rapport and critical relationship with it, and that he also, very early in his political life, began a practice of appropriating aspects of others' arguments, synthesizing them with contrasting concepts, and then pushing them to their extreme, at times dialectically redeveloping them in ways their inventors may have never fully fathomed. As with his brother's critique of Cesaire's 1946 campaign, it can be said that Fanon appropriated much from Cesaire, and especially his seminal text, *Discourse on Colonialism*.

Critically challenging the traditional interpretations of Fanon's critical theories of colonialism, violence, and decolonization, the second form of Fanonism, "Decolonialist Fanonism," revolves around an intense expatiation of his conceptions of *racial colonialism*, views on revolutionary violence, and discourse on revolutionary decolonization. Beginning with an exposition of the ways in which Fanon's ideas converge and diverge with Aime

Cesaire's revolutionary Negritude, the study gives way to critical discussions of how the combination of racialization and colonization created a new form of colonialism (i.e., *racial colonialism*), perhaps, unprecedented in the annals of human history. From there it focuses on what Fanon innovatively offered as the "solution" to the "colonial problem" and the critical distinction he made between "true" and "false" decolonization before concluding with an informed analysis of how racial colonial violence, in some senses, summons the anticolonial violence of revolutionary decolonization. Let us now, therefore, critically turn to Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, where it may be said the real roots of Fanon's dialectic of decolonization and liberation lie.

### AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORETICAL DISCOURSE ON CESAIRE'S *DISCOURSE ON COLONIALISM*

When Fanon (1968) wrote, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon" (p. 35), he knew—as he had illustrated as far back as his essays in *El Moudjahid* and *A Dying Colonialism*—that Cesaire (1972), in *Discourse on Colonialism*, had passionately and polemically argued that "no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization—and therefore force—is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased, that irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one repudiation to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment" (pp. 17–18). The "force" which Cesaire writes of above is none other than outright, naked violence. The "colonizers" literally "force," through violent and other means, the "natives" to relinquish their lives, lands, and labor. This is a tale told many times over all throughout Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia. However, as often as the tale has been told, few theorists involved in the discourse on decolonization have explored the legitimacy and validity of *retribution*—that is, "punishment for evil done or reward for good done"—with the depth and piercing precision of Aime Cesaire (Irele, 1968; Tomich, 1979; Towa, 1969a, 1969b). In stating that "a civilization which justifies colonization . . . is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased" and, then, invoking retributive justice through "punishment," Cesaire cuts-to-the-chase, if you will. He wishes to make it known, to the colonized and oppressed otherwise, that the colonial world—an immoral world, an unethical world, an irreligious world—yearns for, and demands: "Violence! The violence of the weak . . . the violence of revolutionary action" (Cesaire, 1972, pp. 28, 34). The "revolutionary action" that Cesaire claims the "colonial situation" calls for, is definitely what he, Fanon, and, as we

shall soon observe, the Kenyan revolutionary writer, Ngugi wa Thiongo, term: *decolonization*.

For those who would argue that Césaire is a naïve “nativist,” one who simply espouses a radical rhetoric of “return” or “cultural recuperation,” it would be prudent to consider his concept of cultural exchange. He believes that cultural “contacts” between divergent “civilizations” is “a good thing,” but despises and detests, and rightly so, “humanity,” having been, or being, “reduced to a monologue” (pp. 11, 57). Césaire said:

I admit that it is a good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other; that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds; that whatever its own particular genius may be, a civilization that withdraws into itself atrophies; that for civilizations, exchange is oxygen; that the great good fortune of Europe is to have been a crossroads, and that because it was the locus of all ideas, the receptacle of all philosophies, the meeting place of all sentiments, it was the best center for the redistribution of energy. But, then I ask the following question: has colonization really *placed civilizations in contact*? Or, if you prefer, of all the ways of *establishing contact*, was it the best? I answer *no*. . . . Between *colonization* and *civilization* there is an infinite distance; that out of all the colonial expeditions that have been undertaken, out of all the colonial statutes that have been drawn up, out of all the memoranda that have been dispatched by all the ministries, there could not come a single human value. (pp. 11–12, emphasis in original)

Césaire supports cultural exchange and the placing of civilizations in contact with one another. What he does not agree with, however, is the domination of one human, social, political, and/or cultural group over that of any or all others. Hence, here his comments point to a distinct anti-colonial conception of *self-determination*. Domination, whether colonialist or capitalist (or both), demands “revolutionary action,” and this “action,” as stated above, has been designated, defined, and described as—the process(es) and program(s) of—decolonization.

Fanon’s conception of decolonization, what E. Hansen (1977, p. 27) has termed “revolutionary decolonization,” is inscrutable without linking it to Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism*. Césaire’s emphasis on not simply decolonization, but self-determination and African consciousness were appropriated by Fanon and, as was his custom, synthesized with contrasting anti-colonial concepts (including Sartre’s critiques of capitalism and colonialism), and then belabored to their extreme (see Sartre, 1948, 1963, 1974, 1976, 1995, 2006). Just as he had done with Joby’s critique of Césaire’s 1946 campaign, which would also impact his thinking in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon took Césaire’s discourse on colonialism and Africanized (or, rather, Algerianized) it and, even more, he dialectically deepened and further developed its revolutionary dimension(s).

**ENGAGING FANON'S PHILOSOPHICAL FATHER:  
AIME CESAIRE, REVOLUTIONARY NEGRITUDE,  
AND THE CRITICAL (RE)TURN TO RADICAL  
TRADITIONAL AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY**

Negritude has lived through all kinds of adventures. . . . I would like to say that everyone has his [or her] own Negritude. . . . There has been too much theorizing about Negritude.

—Aime Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (p. 75)

Aime Césaire is reported to have coined the term “Negritude” in 1939, using it first in his long prose-poem *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (*Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*).<sup>6</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, André Breton, and a host of others have argued that Césaire’s *Notebook* is the quintessential revolutionary Negritude poem, and that his call to Caribbean people to rediscover their African roots was simultaneously seminal, radical, evocative, and abstruse. Fanon (1969) famously asserted in “West Indians and Africans,” from *Toward the African Revolution*:

Until 1939 the West Indian lived, thought, dreamed (we have shown this in *Black Skin, White Masks*), composed poems, wrote novels exactly as a white man would have done. We understand now why it was not possible for him, as for the African poets, to sing the black night, “The black woman with pink heels.” Before Césaire, West Indian literature was a literature of Europeans. The West Indian identified himself with the white man, adopted a white man’s attitude, “was a white man.” (p. 26)

Césaire’s poem “created a scandal,” Fanon gleefully recalled, because Césaire was an educated black, and educated blacks simply did not want to be black: they wanted to be white, and absurdly thought of themselves and their work as white and/or contributions to European culture and “civilization”—I am, of course, using the word “civilization” here in an extremely sardonic sense, especially considering the conundrum of a supposed “civilization” that racially colonizes and decimates non-European or, rather, non-white cultures and civilizations. In fact, as Fanon observed in several of his studies, black intellectuals have long lived in a make-believe world of their own: rejected by the white world, and relentlessly rejecting the black world (à la Du Bois’s concept of double-consciousness and E. Franklin Frazier’s *The Black Bourgeoisie*). Césaire sought to “return” to, and reconnect not only with Caribbean history and culture, but with what he understood to be the roots of Caribbean history and culture: precolonial and anticolonial indigenous, continental and diasporan African history and culture. In what follows, Fanon gives us a sense of how unusual and unique Césaire’s critical rediscovery project was in Martinique in particular, and the Caribbean

in general, all the while displaying his, Fanon's, own intense awe and the irony of Césaire's breakthrough and brilliance:

For the first time a *lycée* teacher—a man, therefore, who was apparently worthy of respect—was seen to announce quite simply to West Indian society “that it is fine and good to be a Negro.” To be sure, this created a scandal. It was said at the time that he was a little mad and his colleagues went out of their way to give details as to his supposed ailments. What indeed could be more grotesque than an educated man, a man with a diploma, having in consequence understood a good many things, among others that “it was unfortunate to be a Negro,” proclaiming that his skin was beautiful and that the “big black hole” was a source of truth. Neither the mulattoes nor the Negroes understood this delirium. The mulattoes because they had escaped from the night, the Negroes because they aspired to get away from it. Two centuries of white truth proved this man wrong. He must be mad, for it was unthinkable that he could be right. (pp. 21–22)

Fanon is careful and critical to note Césaire's deconstruction of “white truth,” which takes us right back to Sartre's (2001) assertion in “Black Orpheus” that “[t]he revolutionary black is a negation because he wishes to be in complete nudity: in order to build his Truth, he must first destroy the Truth of others” (p. 124). Through *Négritude*, Césaire seeks to deracinate continental and diasporan Africans' internalization of antiblack racism and Eurocentrism. He knows all too well that blacks have been told time and time again that they are, and have always been, uncivilized, unintelligent, primitive, and promiscuous, and with his work he strives to counter colonialism and racism by rediscovering and, if need be, creating new anti-imperialist African values. Césaire's deconstruction of “white truth” and Sartre's contention that “[t]he revolutionary black is a negation because he wishes to be in complete nudity” also illustrates Césairean *Négritude's* intense emphasis on decolonization and re-Africanization (Toure, 1959). When Sartre writes of “nudity,” he is acknowledging that part of the *Négritude* project involves deracination, or stripping or suspending (perhaps in an existential phenomenological sense) blacks of their current conception(s) of themselves and their life-worlds, which has more often than not been diabolically bequeathed to them by the world of white supremacist colonial capitalism.

With *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, Césaire introduced several concepts, and two in particular, which would later turn out to be central to the discourse on black identity and African philosophy, as well as determinant of a new direction in the francophone and Pan-African production and representation of knowledge about Africa and its diaspora. The two core concepts were, first, of course, “*Négritude*,” and secondly, Césaire's special use(s) of the word “return.” As I have briefly discussed Césaire's

Négritudian notion of “return” above, below I will further outline the distinctive characteristics of his conception of Négritude before exploring the ways in which it indelibly influenced Fanon’s critical theory of revolutionary decolonization.

### SO MUCH MORE THAN BLACK MILITANT MARXIST-EXISTENTIALIST-PHENOMENOLOGICAL-SURREALISM: ON CESAIRE’S RADICALISM AND REVOLUTIONARY NEGRITUDE

Négritude, according to Césaire, is at once “a violent affirmation” of “Negrohood”—or “Africity,” as Senghor would later phrase it—as well as “a struggle against alienation;” “an awareness of the [need for] solidarity among blacks;” “a resistance to the politics of assimilation;” “a decolonization of consciousness;” “a reaction of enraged youth;” “a concrete rather than abstract coming to consciousness;” and, a “search for . . . identity” (Césaire, 1972, pp. 72–76; see also Senghor, 1995b, p. 123; 1996, p. 49). Négritude, therefore, from Césaire’s point of view, is wide ranging and grounded in black radical politics and a distinct Pan-African perspective; a purposeful perspective aimed not only at “returning” to, and reclaiming Africa but, perhaps more importantly, consciously creating an authentic “African” or “black” self. In order to convey both the usable parts of Africa’s past and blacks’ present intense “search for . . . identity,” Césaire (1972) created a new language to more adequately express the new Africana logic, “an Antillean French, a black French,” as he contended (p. 67). In his efforts to create a new language, he demonstrates Négritude’s connections to surrealism, and also Négritude’s commitments to revolution, decolonization, and re-Africanization. As Lilyan Kesteloot (1991) has observed in *Black Writers in French: A Literary History of Négritude*, for Césaire surrealism “was synonymous with revolution; if [he] preferred the former, it was not only because of political censorship, but because [he] wanted to show that it referred not merely to social reform but to a more radical change aimed at the very depths of individual awareness” (p. 263).<sup>7</sup> With Négritude, Césaire deconstructed the French language and attempted to decolonize “French Africa” and “French Africans.” He was adamant about creating a new language to communicate his new logic, *Négritude*, stating: “I want to emphasize very strongly that—while using as a point of departure the elements that French literature gave me—at the same time I have always strived to create a new language, one capable of communicating the African heritage” (Césaire, 1972, p. 67).<sup>8</sup>

Césairean Négritude, as is made clear by the aforementioned, is rooted in “the African heritage,” that is, the historicity of African people, and similar to Senghorian Négritude and Du Boisian discourse, understands that

people of African descent, like all other human groups, have—as Du Bois (1986) said—a “great message . . . for humanity” (p. 820; Rabaka 2007b, 2008a, forthcoming). Césaire (1972) stated: “[T]here were things to tell the world. We [the theorists of Negritude] were not dazzled by European civilization. We bore the imprint of European civilization but we thought that Africa could make a contribution to Europe” (pp. 76–77).

In *Discourse on Colonialism*, Césaire relates that “European civilization” had “two major problems to which its existence [had] given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem” (p. 9). Negritude, then, as postulated by Césaire, had the onus of engaging capitalism *and* colonialism, as well as racism. It was there, located in the locus of the diabolical dialectic of European overdevelopment and African underdevelopment, which is to say, European “civilization” and African colonization that Césairean Negritude confronted and contested the “howling savagery” and “barbarity,” as Césaire put it, of “the negation of civilization” (pp. 15, 18).

Césaire understands European “civilization” to rest on the colonization of non-Europeans—again, their lives, labor, and lands. His Negritude was a revolutionary humanist enterprise that was sympathetic to the sufferings of, in his own words, “non-European peoples,” especially “Indians . . . Hindus . . . South Sea islanders . . . [and] Africans” (pp. 14, 58). Moreover, Césairean Negritude viewed European “civilization” as a “decadent” and “dying civilization” that had “undermined [non-European] civilizations, destroyed countries, ruined nationalities, [and] extirpated ‘the root of diversity’” (pp. 9, 59). To combat and counter the global destructiveness of European “civilization,” Césaire suggested that persons of African descent, working in concert with other racially colonized, exploited, and alienated human beings, rebel and revolt against the savagery, barbarity, and brutality of European conquerors, colonizers, and capitalists (p. 13). He thundered:

[C]apitalist society, at its present stage, is incapable of establishing a concept of the rights of all men, just as it has proved incapable of establishing a system of individual ethics. . . . Which comes down to saying that the salvation of Europe is not a matter of revolution in methods. It is a matter of the Revolution—the one which, until such time as there is a classless society, will substitute for the narrow tyranny of a dehumanized bourgeoisie the preponderance of the only class that still has a universal mission, because it suffers in its flesh from all the wrongs of history, from all the universal wrongs: the proletariat. (pp. 15, 61)

Césaire’s Negritude is “revolutionary,” not because it critically engages and appropriates certain aspects of Marxism, surrealism, and existentialism, but by virtue of the fact that it understands that: “Marx is all right, but we [the enslaved, racially colonized, exploited, and alienated] need to complete Marx” (p. 70).<sup>9</sup> Just what does Césaire mean, “we need to complete Marx”? Part of what he is suggesting is that it is important for the



economically exploited and racially oppressed to come to the discomfiting realization (especially for many non-white Marxists, and black Marxists in particular) that “the” revolution that Karl Marx had in mind was a war to be waged not on behalf of a “universal” proletariat, but on behalf of the proletariat of his, Marx’s, time and mind: white, working-class men (Di Stephano, 1991, 2008; Ferguson, 1998; C. L. R. James, 1977, 1980b, 1983, 1984, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1999; C. J. Robinson, 2000, 2001). Moreover, Marx, unlike Friedrich Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, rarely wrote a flattering word concerning women. So, women as gender oppressed and exploited workers were not an integral part of his anti-capitalist theorizations either.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it is a known fact that both Marx and Engels believed that the enslavement of people of African descent and the colonization of the “colored”/nonwhite world was a “necessary evil.”<sup>11</sup> For example, in his article “The British Rule in India,” Marx related to his readers:

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan [India], was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is: Can [white, working-class male] mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution. Then, whatever bitterness the spectacle of the crumbling of an ancient world may have for our personal feelings, we have the right, in point of history, to exclaim with Goethe:

Should this torture then torment us  
Since it brings us greater pleasure?  
Were not through the rule of Timur  
Souls devoured without measure?

(Marx and Engels, 1972, p. 41)

Engels, echoing Marx’s pro-colonialism, in an essay entitled, “Defense of Progressive Imperialism in Algeria,” stated with a stark confidence that would have surely made Fanon’s blood boil:

Upon the whole it is, in our opinion, very fortunate that the Arabian chief [Abdel-Kader] has been taken. The struggle of the Bedouins was a hopeless one, and though the manner in which brutal soldiers, like Bugeaud, have carried on the war is highly blamable, the conquest of Algeria is an important and fortunate fact for the progress of [European] civilization. . . . [T]he conquest of Algeria has already forced the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli, and even the Emperor of Morocco, to enter upon the road of [European] civilization. . . . All these nations of free barbarians look very proud, noble, and glorious at a distance, but only come near them and you will find that they, as well as the more civilized nations, are

ruled by the lust of gain, and only employ ruder and more cruel means. And after all, the modern [European] bourgeois, with civilization, industry, order, and at least relative enlightenment following him, is preferable to the feudal lord or to the marauding robber, with the barbarian state of society to which they belong. (Marx and Engels, 1989a, pp. 450–451)

What should be taken note of and emphasized here—and this extends well beyond colonial India and Algeria to the rest of the colored/racially colonized (non-European/nonwhite) world—is the disconcerting fact that neither Marx nor Engels compassionately considered the “howling savagery” and hypocrisy, the “barbarity” and “brutality” that European racial colonial rule wreaked upon the wretched of the earth. Moreover, the writings of both Marx and Engels attest to the fact that European imperial expansion—that is, the violent racial colonial conquest of the non-European/nonwhite world—has been, and continues to be carried out precisely as Fanon (1968) said it must be if the oppressive and exploitative divide between the colonized and the colonizer, the racially ruled and the racial rulers, is to remain: “by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons” (p. 36). Cesairean Negritude, similar to Fanonian philosophy as we shall see in the succeeding sections, understands that the “globalization of European civilization presupposes and is grounded on the systematic destruction of non-European civilizations” (Serequeberhan, 1994, p. 61). When and where Marx exonerates British or European rule in India, or any other non-European continent or country, and when and where Engels advocates “progressive imperialism” in Algeria—as if imperialism in any form could be genuinely “progressive”—is precisely when and where Du Bois, James, Cesaire, Fanon, and Cabral, among many other black radicals, move away from Marx’s and Marxist Eurocentrism and/or white supremacism (see Bogues, 1983, 2003; Marable, 1983; Rabaka, 2009; C. J. Robinson, 2000, 2001; Rodney, 1972; Serequeberhan, 1990).

In contradistinction to the “revolutionary” rhetoric of the white Marxists (communists and socialists alike), who have historically produced empty page after page of promises to racialized and colonized people, Cesairean Negritude, a “Negritude [of and] in action,” knows “that the emancipation of the Negro consist[s] of more than just political freedom.” Cesairean Negritude, it should be reiterated, is among other things an intense “search for . . . identity,” an ever-evolving exploration of Africanity and freedom (“more than just political freedom”), which is fundamental to the formation of any human(e) identity (Cesaire, 1972, pp. 75, 70, 76).<sup>12</sup> In other words, Africans will never know who they have been, who they are, or who they are (capable of) becoming unless they have the freedoms (plural) to explore and examine their inherited historicity and the very human right to determine their own destiny.

"Colonialism petrifies the subjugated culture," writes Eritrean philosopher Tsenay Serequeberhan (1994, p. 101). Under colonialism neither the colonized nor the colonizer knows himself or herself. The colonized live lives of "double-consciousness," as Du Bois put it, or "third-person consciousness," as Fanon would have it, and the sad reality of their situation forces "the urge for freedom" upon them (Du Bois, 1997, pp. 38–39; Fanon, 1967, p. 110; Jahn, 1968, p. 241). Grappling with "the urge for freedom" places the racially colonized squarely in existential and ontological opposition to the colonizer, leaving both sides with dialectical and extremely perplexing onuses: on the one hand, the struggle to maintain racial and colonial domination and discrimination, and, on the other hand, the fight for freedoms—that is, emancipation in every sphere of human existence (Bernasconi, 2002; G. Wilder, 2003b, 2004, 2005). Césaire (1972) said, "It is the colonized man who wants to move forward, and the colonizer who holds things back" (p. 25). The colonizer "who holds things back," moreover, asphyxiates and/or retards the colonized person's "being-in-the-world," their very perception and experience of the world in which they have inherited and inhabit. It is precisely at this moment that the racially colonized human being is reduced to a mere "object" or "thing" in the colonizer's morbid mind, and in the racial colonial world in general. Note Césaire's colonial equation: "colonization = thingification" (p. 21). He observes, however, that both the colonized and the colonizer suffer the consequences of colonialism:

[C]olonization, I repeat, dehumanizes even the most civilized man; that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect of colonization, that I wanted to point out. (pp. 19–20, all emphasis in original)

Césaire turned to the horrifying history of Hitler's Nazi Germany to ground his "boomerang effect of colonization" thesis. He intentionally chose an example that he knew was fresh in the European imagination, and one that was controversial, and one that would shock and awe his white readers. Similar to *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, *Discourse on Colonialism* was written and structured in a way to express a dialectical and intense sense of struggle—both internal and external struggle—and, perhaps more importantly, the development of Negritude; the development, in other words, of a new black consciousness, a necessarily "negative" or critical consciousness in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world.

*Discourse on Colonialism*, then, paints a picture in prose, as opposed to the surrealist poetry of *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, which reveals the double-consciousness and life-threatening dialectic of blacks' intense and incessant struggle to transgress and transcend the conflicted color-lines and morally corrupting chasms of racism and colonialism.

Much more than surrealism in blackface, Cesairean Negritude represents *fighting words*; words used as weapons, weapons which bring revolution and cultural renewal. Cesaire's work, his words, and ideas were aggressively argued in French with the express intent of countering French racism and French colonialism. In "Black Orpheus" Sartre (2001) observed that because "the oppressor is present in the very language that they [the theorists of Negritude] speak, they will speak this language in order to destroy it." He also pointed out that the surrealists did not have the same agenda: "The contemporary European poet tries to dehumanize words in order to give them back to nature; the black herald is going to *de-Frenchify* them; he will crush them, break their usual associations, he will violently couple them" (pp. 122–123, emphasis in original). Cesaire's violent, *self-defensive*, and *anticolonial counterviolent* coupling of words as weapons was also symbolic of the ubiquitous violence of black lived-experiences and lived-endurances in an antiblack racist and white supremacist world.

*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* opens with a poetic portrait of Martinique's capital, Fort-de-France. The Caribbean capital city is contrasted with France's metropolises, and specifically Paris. Fort-de-France is described as flat, lacking life, and filled with colonial zombies, but nevertheless, in spite of its inertia, it is constantly on the brink of violence. However, not the violence of liberation but the violence of survival, the violence of lives lived under a brutal, spirit-breaking, assimilation-advocating racial colonialism: the "black-on-black violence" of the internal colony within the colony, the ghetto, and its vicious, breathtakingly brutal, and deeply dehumanizing violence. For Cesaire, his work must not simply speak to this violence, but more, it must combat it, and in this sense his poetry, as he pointed out, is "a cursed poetry . . . because it was knowledge and no longer entertainment" (quoted in Kesteloot, 1991, p. 261). His work was also "cursed," he believed, because "it lifted the ban on all things black" (p. 261). Once more, surrealism made no efforts to do any of this, and this is precisely where Cesairean Negritude, and Negritude in general, distinguishes itself from surrealism (and, I am wont to aver, phenomenology, existentialism, pragmatism, Marxism, communism, socialism, etc.).

Cesairean Negritude surpasses surrealism in its efforts to simultaneously combat capitalism, colonialism, *and* racism. It also puts the premium on revolutionary humanism by extending its discourse well beyond continental and diasporan African life-worlds and life-struggles. In the following passage, Cesaire connects the holocausts of countless racialized and colo-

nized peoples with the Jewish Holocaust and critically questions Europe's supposed moral conscience, and emphasizes racism's irrationality. Therefore, when Césaire writes above of the "boomerang effect of colonization," he is saying, very similar to Malcolm X, that "the chickens always come home to roost," and that it is not only nonwhites/non-Europeans who suffer the violence of white supremacy and European imperialism: *imperialism does not offer allegiance to anyone*. Césairean Negritude, again going back to Sartre (2001), reframes the Jewish holocaust by creating "what Bataille calls the holocaust of words" (p. 122; see also Sartre, 1965). In clear, sardonic prose Césaire (1972) explained:

[B]efore they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack.

Yes, it would be worthwhile to study clinically, in detail, the steps taken by Hitler and Hitlerism and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler *inhabits* him, that Hitler is his *demon*, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not *crime* in itself, *the crime against man*, it is not *the humiliation of man as such*, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa. (p. 14, all emphasis in original)

The violence of colonial conquest, according to Césaire, dehumanizes both the colonized and the colonizer. As the colonizer ruthlessly dominates the colonized person's life-world and language-world, the colonized experiences not merely dehumanization, but *deracination*, which means "[l]iterally, to pluck or tear up by the roots; to eradicate or exterminate" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1998, p. 68). For Césaire (1972), the deracination of Africans must be countered and/or combated by "a violent affirmation" of their Africanity, which includes not only their distinct identity but also their unique historicity; hence, their Negritude, their distinctly African attitude toward the world (p. 74). What is more, Negritude, being nothing other than "a concrete rather than abstract coming into [African] consciousness," knows that "it is equally necessary to decolonize our minds, our inner life, at the same time that we decolonize society" (pp. 76, 78). Decolonization, as Fanon eloquently observed in *Toward the African Revolution* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, demands a *critical return*

to the precolonial history and culture of the colonized nation, a radical rediscovery of the precolonial history and culture of the colonized people. In his own words:

The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves. The immobility to which the native is condemned can only be called into question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonization—the history of pillage—and bring into existence the history of the nation—the history of decolonization. (Fanon, 1968, p. 51)

In order for the colonized to “put an end to the history of colonization” and “bring into existence the history of the nation,” they must make a critical distinction between their history and culture and that of the colonizer. Moreover, they must move beyond their current colonized culture and critically return to, and deeply ground themselves in their own precolonial history, culture, and struggle(s). But—and this is where we dance with the dialectic—as they “return” to their precolonial past, they must not romanticize and find Utopia on every page of their hidden history. Their engagement of their precolonial past must be critical, expressly seeking to salvage only those things from the past which provide paradigms for revolution and liberation in the present and future. Long before Fanon, Césaire argued for a critical return to Africa’s precolonial past, a past he understood to offer many contributions to the ongoing Africana (and worldwide) decolonization and liberation struggle(s). In the sections to follow we leave Césaire and look at the ways in which Fanon builds on and goes far beyond Césaire’s conception of decolonization and makes several critical distinctions concerning decolonization that have frequently failed to find a foothold amongst contemporary Fanonists. One of the major innovations of Fanon’s work involves his reconceptualization of colonialism by intensely emphasizing its racial or, rather, racist aspects when imposed by whites onto nonwhites. What, then, was Fanon’s conception and critique of the racial colonial context?

### **THE WORLD(S) OF WHITE SUPREMACIST COLONIALISM: FANON’S CONCEPTION AND CRITIQUE OF THE RACIAL COLONIAL CONTEXT AND FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO CRITICAL RACE THEORY**

In Fanon’s conception and critique(s) of the colonial context he moved beyond a purely economic or Marxist analysis and placed a greater em-

phasis on the psycho-sociopolitical pitfalls and ideological implications of the distinct dimensions of the colonialism or, rather, the *racial* colonialism that nonwhites endured at the hands of whites. Race and racism, therefore, where at the heart of Fanon's conception of colonialism, and the lion's share of his legacy revolves around the ways in which he was able to innovatively demonstrate that racism and colonialism are inextricable in colonialist (as well as capitalist) situations where whites have colonized nonwhites. In the racial colonial context historical happenings, that is, all "important" events, in one way or another, are centered around the struggle(s) between the white colonizers and the nonwhite colonized. Which is to say that the sense of heightened humanity, the prosperity and privileges enjoyed by the colonizers are a direct and incontrovertible result of the rote racialization, intentional immiseration, and planned pauperization of the colonized (Du Bois, 1945, 1960, 1963, 1965; Marable, 1983, 1987; Rodney, 1972).

Fanon pointed out that part of what distinguishes whites' colonization of nonwhites is the often-overlooked fact that racial colonization is twofold: that is, there is simultaneously the continuous and crude colonization, as well as the incessant, intense, and irrational racialization of nonwhites. The racial colonizers' existence and identity, their very lives and legacies rest on their abominable ability to constantly produce and reproduce racial colonial violence, exploitation, and oppression. They constantly make conscious decisions and condone immoral behavior that grants them the maximum profit from the racial colonial system and roguishly robs the nonwhite colonized of their basic human rights. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1968) spoke directly to this issue: "For it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence. The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say, his property, to the colonial system. . . . You do not turn any society, however primitive it may be, upside down with such a program if you have not decided from the very beginning, that is to say from the actual formulation of the program, to overcome all the obstacles that you will come across in so doing" (pp. 36–37). The white colonizers were unequivocally committed to "overcom[ing] all the obstacles"—whether linguistic, cultural, social, political, religious, etc.—in their quest to not only colonize but, based on Fanon's critical contentions, to racialize the nonwhite world. It was, and remains, the dual colonization *and* racialization of the nonwhite world that distinguishes discussions of racial colonialism from those of "colonialism" in a general sense. It should be reiterated that nonwhites have historically colonized other nonwhites, and these instances and acts of aggression should be (nay, must be!) strongly condemned. However, what adds a deeper, perhaps, even more diabolical dimension to white's colonization of nonwhites is the insurmountable issue of the rote racialization and irrational ethnicization of nonwhites in the world of white supremacist colonialism (Babing, 1978;

Graebner, 2007; McCormack, 2007; Mintz, 1975; R. Ross, 1982; Serrano, 2005; Spickard, 2007; Staples, 1987).

From Fanon's perspective, the most distinctive feature of racial colonialism (again, as opposed to "colonialism" in a general sense) is the fact that this kind of colonialism intertwines, interlocks, and intersects with racism, which ideologically undergirds and provides a wrongheaded, racist rationale for the division of the world into white "human beings" and nonwhite "native" subhuman "things" that are brutishly bound together by white supremacist production and reproduction processes of racial colonialism, as well as, as we shall see in the following "form" of Fanonism, "Marxist Fanonism," *racial capitalism* (pp. 36–37). On the one hand, in the world of white supremacist colonialism whites' sense of heightened humanity and "God-given" right to every privilege is collapsed and combined into one, and a person is "blessed" simply because he or she is white, and for no other reason. In fact, it is only by exercising their "God-given" right to rule over nonwhites that whites really and truly demonstrate that they are human beings, that they are "divine[ly]" different from the nonwhite "native" subhuman "things." On the other hand, nonwhites in the world of white supremacist colonialism anguishingly experience the exact opposite of what whites experience. For example, where whites have an overabundance of rights, nonwhites experience a complete absence of rights, which ultimately leaves them at the mercy of the very irrational whites who robbed them of their rights and created the world of white supremacist colonialism in the first place. In his classic, *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, Jean-Paul Sartre (1955) critically engaged this issue:

Any member of the ruling class is a man of divine right. Born into a class of leaders, he is convinced from childhood that he is born *to* command and, in a certain sense, this is true, since his parents, who do command, have brought him into the world to carry on after them. A certain social function, into which he will slip as soon as he is of age, the metaphysical reality, as it were, of his person, awaits him. Thus, in his own eyes, he is a person, an *a priori* synthesis of legal right and of fact. Awaited by his peers, destined to relieve them at the appointed time, he exists because he *has the right* to exist. This sacred character which the bourgeois has for his fellow and which manifests itself in ceremonies of *recognition* (the greeting, the formal announcement, the ritual visit, etc.) is what is called human dignity. The ideology of the ruling class is completely permeated with this idea of dignity. And when men are said to be "the lords of creation," this expression is to be taken in its strongest sense; they are its monarchs by divine right; the world is made for them; their existence is the absolute and perfectly satisfying value to the mind which gives its meaning to the universe. That is the original meaning of all philosophical systems which affirm the primacy of the subject over the object and the composition of Nature through the activity of thought. It is self-evident that man, under these conditions is a supra-natural being; what we call Nature is the sum-total



of that which exists without having the right to do so. (p. 214, all emphasis in original)

Clearly in the world of white supremacist colonialism and capitalism, whites are the "lords of creation" and "supra-natural being[s]," where non-whites are synthesized with, and perceived as part of "Nature," as Sartre aptly put it, "which exists without having the right to do so." In the world of white supremacist colonialism and capitalism, nonwhites do not have the right to exist on their own terms. If, indeed, they do exist in the white supremacist colonial capitalist world they must do so on white supremacist colonial capitalist terms: terms, which place them well beyond (or, rather, well-beneath) the borders and boundaries of human rights; terms, which exclude them from the "ceremonies of *recognition*"; and, terms, which always and everywhere deny them access to the process(es) of individuation and, ultimately, an authentic sense of self, as opposed to a prefabricated racial colonial self-designed to "serve" the white "lords of creation," the white supremacist "supra-natural being[s]." There are no two ways about it: either nonwhites are racistly reduced to "Nature," to the subregions of subhumanity, or they are erased and/or rendered invisible because they refuse to be boxed into one of the many human dignity-denying categories of the white supremacist colonial capitalist world.

It is, consequently, racism that connects colonialism to capitalism and provides the racial colonial capitalist system with a kind of contradictory cohesion. In both the racial colonialist and the racial capitalist worlds non-white "natives" are reduced to subhuman "things" or "objects," and it is the obscene objectification of nonwhites which perniciously permits whites to ideologically embrace the ideals of Western European "democracy" while simultaneously violating, exploiting, and oppressing nonwhite "natives" in the most brutal, undemocratic, immoral, and inhuman manners. Non-white "natives" are inextricable from, and often callously collapsed into the "Nature" of their indigenous environments; they are, literally, fused with, and into their natural "habitats," as is customary when dealing with animals, plants, or other nonhuman "exotic" organisms. All of this is to say that whites make little or no distinction between nonwhite persons and the other "exotic" "objects" of their (the nonwhites') indigenous regions, countries, or continents. Again, Sartre adds insights: "For the sacrosanct, the oppressed classes are part of Nature. They are not to command. In other societies, perhaps, the fact of a slave's being born within the *domus* [a wealthy household] also conferred a sacred character upon him, that of being born *to serve*, that of being the man of divine duty in relation to the man of divine right" (p. 215, all emphasis in original). We will return to Sartre's discourse on the "man of divine duty" and the "man of divine right" below, but first it is extremely important for us to observe the ways in

which he conceptually connected racism and colonialism with capitalism when and where he turned his reader's attention to the malicious (albeit often nonchalant) manner in which the "native's" land *and* "the fruits of his labor is stolen from him." Further critically commenting on the "natives" supposed "Nature" in contrast to their actual anguishing alienation in the racial colonial capitalist world, Sartre said:

Everyone has felt the contempt implicit in the term "native," used to designate the inhabitants of a colonized country. The banker, the manufacturer, even the professor in the home country, are not natives of any country; they are not natives at all. The oppressed person, on the other hand, feels himself to be a native; each single event in his life repeats to him that he has not the right to exist. His parents have not brought him into the world for any particular purpose, but rather by chance, *for no reason*; at best, because they liked children or because they were open to a certain kind of propaganda, or because they wanted to enjoy the advantages accorded to large families. No special function awaits him and, if he has been apprenticed, it was not done so as to prepare him to continue the unjustifiable existence he has been leading since birth. He will work in order to live, and to say that the ownership of the fruits of his labor is stolen from him is an understatement. Even the meaning of his work is stolen from him, since he does not have a feeling of solidarity with the society for which he produces. (p. 215, all emphasis in original)

At first issue, we see here that Sartre makes an extremely important distinction between "the man of divine duty" and "the man of divine right." Where whites have a "divine right" to rule the world, nonwhites have a "divine duty" to "serve" whites in their iniquitous quest(s) to conquer and re-create the world to suite their white supremacist imperialist whims and wishes. Never mind the fact that the nonwhite cultures and civilizations that whites colonized and racialized, in most instances, had their own unique precolonial social and political systems and distinct discourses on "democracy," that is, their own versions of amicable egalitarian coexistence. This is all beside the point, and that is that from the white supremacist colonial capitalist point of view, nonwhites were born into the world without "any particular purpose." They were born, "rather by chance, *for no reason*." Whites, and whites alone are born with a purpose, and that purpose is, of course, "to command." Being born into "a class of leaders," whites take it upon themselves to "carry on after" their ancestors, to extend and expand the truculent traditions of their forebears, and accept the lofty tasks of "lead[ing]" and "command[ing]" the "minority" multitudes who were born without "any particular purpose," that is, the seemingly "naturally" racialized and colonized nonwhite "natives," those subhuman "things" aforementioned. It is from within the framework of this wicked worldview that nonwhites are "legally" and "for their own good" *forced* (frequently

employing viciously violent means) to work in the white supremacist colonial capitalist world and, as Sartre said, "to say that the ownership of the fruits of his [the nonwhite's] labor is stolen from him is an understatement." Consequently, an intense and excruciating racial colonial alienation harries and haunts the nonwhite because "[e]ven the meaning of his work is stolen from him, since he does not have a feeling of solidarity with the society for which he produces."

The harder the racially colonized rails against racial colonialism, the tighter and tighter the neocolonial noose gets around their necks. As discussed in greater detail below, what is needed is much more than polite political protest. In most instances, in fact, the well-meaning marches, protests, and demonstrations of the racially colonized does nothing more than allow them to "let off some steam," while absolutely nothing about white supremacist colonialism is altered. The aftereffects of the racially colonized's piteous political protest is often an intensification of their feelings of inferiority and powerlessness. Increasingly, many among the racially colonized come to terms with their racial colonizers and, in covert complicity with the white colonizers, act against their own best interests. The diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black inferiority deliberately denies nonwhites any notions of their own unique humanity, on their own terms and outside of the orbit of racial colonialism, because white supremacist colonialism strips nonwhites of anything even remotely resembling the psychological, intellectual, and material means which would allow them to consciously and proactively participate in the process(es) of self-transformation and individuation. In the circular (il)logic of white supremacy, the racially colonized, being miserable and made to endure all manner of affronts against their humanity in the white supremacist world, are constantly caricatured as the kind of "creatures" or "beasts of burden" who "deserve" their lot in life. It is often said in white supremacist bourgeois social circles that "real" human beings would not under any circumstances endure such insults to their humanity and, therefore, clearly since the racially colonized accept (or, at the least, endure) such mistreatment they are subhuman, that is, if they are to be considered "human"—which is to say, of course, when compared with the superior "humanity" of the white "lords of creation" and the white "supra-natural being[s]"—at all.

However, it is important to bear in mind here that violence, exploitation, and oppression have borders and boundaries that must be "respected" even within the world of white supremacist colonialism. For instance, violence, exploitation, and oppression cannot be carried so far that it results in the complete negation of the racially colonized, which is to say, that it cannot lead to their total physical destruction, because *the negation of the racially colonized necessitates the negation of the racial colonizer*. Bearing this in mind, let us now look to Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1967),

where he perceptively pointed out that the colonizer "must deny the colonized with all his strength, and at the same time the existence of his victim is indispensable to the continuance of his own being. . . . Were the colonized to disappear, the whole of colonization, including the colonizer, would disappear with him" (pp. 92, 181). What Memmi's work does, especially when compared and contrasted with that of Fanon and Sartre, is intensely emphasize the crude, supposedly "objective" character of racial colonial conditions of production and reproduction, which, as we witnessed above, incessantly assigns the colonizer and the colonized their own distinct and rigid racial-colonial and social-political role within the racial colonial system, a "role" that they disregard and deviate from at their own peril and, even more, under penalty of certain destruction: that is, initially the disruption and then, ultimately, the destruction of the white supremacist colonial world. Hence, we see here that distinctions such as "good" or "bad" colonizers simply have no place within the world of racial colonialism, because each and every one of the colonizers' lived-experiences is always already dictated by the diabolic demands of the white supremacist colonial capitalist process(es) of production and reproduction.

Take, for instance, the new arrivals from the European "mother country." It is not long before they discover that their comparable luxury is inextricable from the cultural disorientation, economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, and social sufferings of the racially colonized. The recently arrived racial colonizer increasingly gains awareness of the fact that he or she sits on one scale of the balance, while the racially colonized unrestfully rests of the other. The higher the white colonizers' quality of life and standard of living, not only in the colonies but also in the omnipresent "mother countries" as well, translates into the lower (i.e., unquestionably the lowest) quality of life and standard of living for the nonwhite colonized. In essence, the deeper the white colonizer breathes, often smelling the "exotic" flowers of their ornately designed antebellum atriums, the more malignly the nonwhite colonized suffocates and experiences historical, cultural, social, and political death and decay.

This, of course, is not to negate the fact that many Europeans in the colonies are not large landowners or elite colonial administrators. Truth be told, the majority of them are themselves formerly poor persons and/or proletariats who are caught within the quagmires of white supremacist colonialist and capitalist process(es) of production and reproduction. Thus, we see why they are more often than not the most vocal and, sometimes, violent defenders of, and foot soldiers for racial colonial privileges. Because of their "work" (more often than not, they do not really and truly "work," they merely oversee others' property and/or investments à la the *petit bourgeoisie* of the European "mother country") in the racial colony, they are given express entry into a higher quality of life and standard of living than they

had access to back in the European “mother country.” This higher quality of life and standard of living they fervently defend against all the clamoring claims of the racially colonized anticolonial radicals, who call into question their (the white colonizers’) increasing opulence in comparison with nonwhite “natives” social death, cultural decay, and planned poverty. The formerly poor persons, and now the recently arrived racial colonizers’ gruesome greed grows and grows and, ironically, in order to keep hold of their relatively miniscule advantages—that is, when compared with those of the white supremacist colonial capitalists who really and truly “command” the racial colonial capitalist system—are coerced into complicity with the very same soul-sundering system which not simply violates, exploits, and oppresses nonwhite “natives” but also formerly poor and working-class whites such as themselves. It is their unconscious consciousness, to put it poorly, of their weak and always wobbling position within the world of white supremacist colonial capitalism that makes them the most vocal and, sometimes, violent defenders of, and foot soldiers for racial colonial privileges and, even more, the ongoing extension and expansion of white supremacist colonialism.<sup>13</sup>

In *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Memmi makes a critical distinction between the “colonist of good intentions” and the “hardcore colonist.” When colonialism is considered with Memmi’s critical distinction in mind, as well as from the Fanonian perspective, which is to say, a critical perspective where it is seen as *white supremacist colonial capitalism*, then the “good intentions” of the “colonist of good intentions” are proven to be nothing more than “feel-good,” awfully empty rhetoric which serves as a subterfuge for, perhaps, one of the most widespread and havoc-wreaking forms of imperialism in human history. In order for the “colonist of good intentions” intentions to really and truly be “good” in so far as the racially colonized are concerned, their “intentions” would have to go above and beyond the limits of “intentions” and well-meaning well-wishes, and transgressively translate into critical theory and radical political praxis geared toward the absolute abolition of white supremacist colonial capitalism. Anything short of this, of this *antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist revolution*, is simply well-meaning moral outrage and polite political protest that, to reiterate, does absolutely nothing to alter white supremacist colonial capitalism. What the well-intentioned racial colonist fails to understand is that if, indeed, nonwhite “natives” were granted “freedom,” “equality,” and “justice” under the auspices of the racial colonial system, then, the very faulty foundation(s) of the said system would be negated. There would be no racial colonial hierarchy, and the world as they themselves have come to know it would cease to exist. It is in this sense that I have argued that the “colonist of good intentions” is an idiotic oxymoron which points to racial colonists whose guilefully guilty consciences will not allow them to enjoy

the spoils of the racial colonial war in which they themselves have surreptitiously played a pivotal racial colonial role.

Now we turn to the "hardcore colonists" who, by openly and unrepentantly maximizing every avenue and opportunity of exploitation that the racial colonial system affords them and by proudly protesting for even more racial colonial privileges, actually prove to be much more honest than the "colonists of good intentions" and demonstrate a greater consistency in their white supremacist colonial capitalist (mis)conduct. Where the "colonists of good intentions" often mask, *white mask*, their willingness to uphold the racial colonial status quo, the "hardcore colonists" unapologetically announce their white supremacists colonial capitalist interests and make it known that they intend to avail themselves of any and all means through which they can increasingly extract more and more wickedly won wealth and depraved privileges from racial colonial capitalism. From time to time, however, even the "hardcore colonists" have to grapple with the problem(s) of legitimizing their racial colonial capitalist privileges. This, as might be expected, is easily achieved by the deliberate dehumanization of the racially colonized, and purposely projecting images, even more, misrepresentations and mischaracterizations of them as the nonwhite "native" subhuman "things" discussed above. It is in this way that the "hardcore colonists" villainously validate, legitimize, and justify their roughish role(s) in the racial colonies, not as the racial colonial crooks that they really are, but as benevolent, Christian, progressive pioneers, multicultural promoters, and "native" protectors.

Undeniably religion has been (and remains) one of the racial colonizers' weapons of choice. Throughout the nonwhite colonial world, Christian missions have played a pivotal role in both the racialization and colonization of nonwhites. When and where the Christian church quickly, carelessly, and Eurocentrically condemned the precolonial and traditional spiritual practices and "religions" of the nonwhite, racially colonized "natives" as "paganism," "heathenism," and "infidelism" is precisely when and where white religion ideologically intertwined with, and became an integral instrument in the establishment, extension, and expansion of white supremacist colonial capitalism. It was within the realm of religion, above and beyond all others, that white supremacist colonialists were able, I reiterate, to villainously validate, legitimize, and justify their roughish role(s) in the racial colonies, not as the racial colonial crooks that they really are, but as benevolent, Christian, progressive pioneers, multicultural promoters, and "native" protectors. White religion had a special way of weakening nonwhites to the wickedness of white supremacist colonial capitalism. For example, those nonwhites who converted (or, rather, who were *diverted*) to white Christianity ultimately came to view their own precolonial and traditional history and culture as "primitive," "barbaric," "savage," and "un-

civilized," and increasingly opened themselves to racial colonial capitalist propaganda.<sup>14</sup> Fanon (1968) revealingly wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

All values, in fact, are irrevocably poisoned and diseased as soon as they are allowed contact with the colonized race. The customs of the colonized, their traditions, their myths—above all, their myths—are the very sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity. That is why we must put the DDT which destroys parasites, the bearers of disease, on the same level as the Christian religion which wages war on embryonic heresies and instincts, and on evil as yet unborn. The recession of yellow fever and the advance of evangelization form part of the same balance sheet. But the triumphant *communiqués* from the missions are in fact a source of information concerning the implantation of foreign influences in the core of the colonized people. I speak of the Christian religion, and no one need be astonished. The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen. (p. 42)

The white colonists attack the traditions and myths—"above all, their myths"—of the racially colonized while clandestinely creating and perpetuating myths of their own concerning the racially colonized. The myths and stereotypes that the colonizer creates are ultimately internalized by the colonized, which leads them to many of the issues Fanon critically engages throughout his corpus. Hence, what began as little more than abstract figments of the white supremacist colonial imagination eventually became a concrete and excruciatingly crueler part of the already inhuman racial colonial reality. This process of white supremacist colonial capitalist production and reproduction of racist myths and stereotypes was aided and accelerated by, of course, white Christianity, Fanon's words above bear witness to as much, but also by real racial colonial sanctions and apartheid administrations which ironically derive their justification from the very same racial falsehoods and ethnic fictions that began as the "abstract figments of the white supremacist colonial imagination" discussed above. Some of the "justifications" for white supremacist colonialism are as follows: "The colonized are lazy, therefore they must be made to work"; "they are not efficient, hence they deserve low (or, no) wages"; "they are innately unintelligent, hence they need direction and protection—that is, protection from themselves and others who might violate or exploit them"; and, "they are uncivilized savages who are slaves to their own instincts, hence the more enlightened white-administered slavery, stern justice, police brutality, and political disenfranchisement are actually good for them and helps to keep them in line and out of trouble." The often overlooked fact that most of these myths and stereotypes could be easily applied to the white colonizers

and the white working classes and masses of the European “mother country” is of no consequence in the evilly irrational world of white supremacist colonialism, because these myths and stereotypes fulfill psychological and social, emotional and economic, as well as political and penal functions for the real rulers of the white supremacist colonial capitalist world: the European (and European American) bourgeoisie.<sup>15</sup>

In the final analysis, considering that the racially colonized are cut off from their history and culture, denied access to all social and political institutions, deprived of their traditional religions and languages, as well as any and all possibilities of unmolested self-definition and self-determination, there remains but two alternatives: the antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist revolution I mentioned above, or a romantic “return” to their precolonial values and institutions, such as their traditional spiritual practices and forms of social organization. However, truth be told, their precolonial values and institutions have been irreparably altered by the onslaught of white supremacist colonialism, and no amount of radical rhetoric or nostalgic Negritude can transform this fact into fiction. It has become something of a rite of passage that continental and diasporan Africans are rudely awakened from their dreams of the paradisiacal African past only to find themselves gagged and bound or, rather, enslaved, if you will, at the height of the most horror-filled moment of the neocolonial nightmare of the African present. It would seem that there is but one real recourse, and that is the antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist revolution aforementioned, what Fanon described as “true” decolonization.

### DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN “TRUE” VS. “FALSE” DECOLONIZATION: FANON’S DISCOURSE ON REVOLUTIONARY DECOLONIZATION

[F]or proof of what is acknowledged to be happening it is no longer necessary to consult the classical Marxist writers.

—Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism:  
The Last Stage of Imperialism* (p. xvii)

Where Marx’s main focus was on “communist revolution,” Fanon’s was on “decolonization.” Decolonization, fundamentally, is a form of revolution waged by, and in the best interests of, racially colonized peoples, “the wretched of the earth,” if you will. It is a process of simultaneous revolutionary transformation of *self* and *society* that seeks to eschew the direct, as well as indirect, imposition of imperial—Eurocentric or otherwise—cultural, religious, racist, colonialist, and capitalist values and models. Decolonization is “a process” insofar as it understands that “independence” is not



gained at the moment the racially colonized country is “given” its “liberty,” and “allowed” to raise its national flag and sing its national anthem. On the contrary, according to Fanon, political independence is merely the beginning, and it, political independence, in no way indicates and/or ensures that the colonized have been freed from colonial values, for these values—which include aesthetic, spiritual, social, political, cultural, intellectual, and psychological mores and models—have historically persisted and plagued the purportedly “post” colonial people and society long after political independence. Grappling with this historical fact, Fanon (1968) wrote:

During the colonial period the people are called upon to fight against oppression; after national liberation, they are called upon to fight against poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. The struggle, they say, goes on. The people realize that life is an unending contest. (pp. 93–94)

Indeed, “life is an unending contest,” especially life lived in the racial colonial capitalist world; thus, Fanon’s concept of decolonization seeks to call into question not simply racial colonialism but also racial (or, rather, *racist*) capitalism, as will be discussed in greater detail in the following “form” of Fanonism, “Marxist Fanonism.” His concept is open-ended, radically dialectical, and self-reflexively critical, and the new nation and the “new men,” nay, the “new humanity” who are to bring this new nation into being, can be achieved through a wide range of revolutionary strategies and tactics, provided—and here I return to Fanon’s faithful caveat—the postcolonial nation and postcolonial humanity “do not imitate Europe, so long as [they] are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe” (pp. 36, 312). If the nation-state that arises from the ashes of racial colonialism becomes dominated by the racially colonized middle class, Fanon’s “greedy” and ever-groveling “national bourgeoisie,” then, not only will the cancer that is neocolonialism have been brought into existence, but racial capitalism, racist-capitalist social relations, racist-capitalist political economy, racist-capitalist culture, etcetera, will tighten the already too-tight, increasingly asphyxiating neocolonial noose it has long had around the wretched of the earth’s necks. This we may call, following the noted literary and cultural theorist, Neil Lazarus (1999), the “neo-colonial option” (p. 163). This “option,” which when critically engaged from the point of view of the wretched of the earth is revealed *not* to be an “option” at all, enables the racially colonized to be more completely racistly capitalized! It enables the superexploited to be further exploited in new and unimaginable ways; to be perpetually dehumanized and disenfranchised; and, to be eternally confined to the prison house that imperial Europe and European America has constructed with the express purpose of quarantining the racialized-colonized, the wretched of the earth.

The “neocolonial option” encourages the racially colonized to choose between the lesser of two evils: either racial colonialism or racist capitalism. However, capitalism, white supremacist or otherwise, is utterly inextricable from racial colonialism. Lazarus sheds light on this issue when he writes that the “neocolonial option” is essentially “a capitalist world system made up—‘after colonialism’—of nominally independent nation-states, bound together by the logic of combined and uneven development, the historical dialectic of core and periphery, development and underdevelopment” (p. 163; see also Lazarus, 1990, 2000, 2004). If the racially colonized middle class, Fanon’s “native” “national bourgeoisie” comes to power in the “post-colonial” nation-state, then, only cosmetic changes to racial colonialism will have been made—or, as Fanon (1968) put it, “there’s nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets. There’s nothing save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag waving: and down there at the bottom an undivided mass, still living in the middle ages, endlessly marking time” (p. 147).

The truth of the matter is that “[i]n its narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country” (p. 149). National independence, in this sick sense, offers the racially colonized middle class alternative opportunities to create new relationships with both the colonizers and the colonized. In terms of the colonized, we have already seen that the racially colonized middle class wishes to exploit them more efficiently in the imperial interests of the European and European American bourgeoisies. With regard to “the middle class of the mother country,” the racially colonized bourgeoisie “discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary” (p. 152). To the racially colonized bourgeoisie, “nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period” (p. 152). Below I quote at length a stunning passage in which Fanon drives the point home that the racially colonized middle class, because it will not “consider as its bounden duty to betray the calling fate has marked out for it,” becomes, for all intents and purposes, neocolonialism’s midwife and European and European American imperialisms’ smokescreen (p. 150).

Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neocolonialism. The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie’s business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But this same lucrative role, this cheap-Jack’s function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolize the incapability of the national middle class to fulfill its historic role of bourgeoisie. Here, the dynamic, pioneer aspect, the characteristics of the inventor and of the discoverer of new worlds which are found

in all national bourgeoisies are lamentably absent. In the colonial countries, the spirit of indulgence is dominant at the core of the bourgeoisie; and this is because the national bourgeoisie identifies itself with the Western bourgeoisie, from whom it has learnt its lessons. It follows the Western bourgeoisie along its path of negation and decadence without ever having emulated it in its first stages of exploration and invention, stages which are an acquisition of that Western bourgeoisie whatever the circumstances. In its beginnings, the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries identifies itself with the decadence of the bourgeoisie of the West. (pp. 152–153)

From the foregoing the need for the dialectical dimension of decolonization appears crystal-clear: decolonization is inherently critical of bourgeois values and culture, whether European *or* African, Eurocentric *or* Afrocentric; it self-reflexively brings dialectical thought to bear on the liberation strategies and tactics, that is, on the liberation theories and praxes undertaken in the revolution against imperialism to achieve an authentically postcolonial world; and, equally important, it applies this same self-reflexive critique to the proponents and opponents, agents and adversaries of revolutionary social, political, and cultural transformation (Duara, 2003; Egbuna, 1986; Kebede, 2004; Memmi, 2006; Osei-Nyame, 1999).

Fanon critically comprehended that European capitalists and colonized African elites were willing to wickedly work together, even “after colonialism,” to continue colonialism, to initiate a new covert form of colonialism, a kinder, gentler form of colonialism: *neocolonialism*. This is why—again, as we will see in the following “form” of Fanonism, “Marxist Fanonism”—Fanon ceaselessly searched for a version of democratic socialism suitable to the particular and peculiar historical and cultural needs of Africa and its diaspora, because it could never be enough to simply *decolonize* Africa and its diaspora, or any other former colony: colonialism must be deracinated, literally, ripped out at the roots. Lazarus (1999), again, offers insights: “for Fanon the *national* project also has the capacity to become the vehicle—the means of articulation—of a *social*(ist) demand which extends beyond decolonization in the merely technical sense, and which calls for a fundamental transformation rather than a mere restructuring of the prevailing social order” (p. 163, all emphasis in original).

This means, then, that in the same process in which the wretched of the earth’s intellectual-activists deracinate racial colonialism from their lives and homelands, they must also offer history- and culture-specific *antiracist* and *anticolonial options*. Alternative egalitarian and revolutionary social organizations, political systems, cultural forms, and human relations have to be re-created or, in many instances, *created*; indigenous traditions must be rescued and critically returned to, in a Cesairean sense, and new ones must be initiated; and, special emphasis should be placed here, decolonization, de-Europeanization, and *revolutionary re-Africanization* ought to be

ongoing—yet again, I return to Cabral's caveat, ongoing "without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures," which the wretched of the earth could (and, I honestly believe, *should*) appropriate and adapt as "they return to the upwards paths of their own culture." Behold the dialectics of what Fanon referred to as "true decolonization"! In his own weighted words:

Nowadays a theoretical problem of prime importance is being set, on the historical plane as well as on the level of political tactics, by the liberation of the colonies: when can one affirm that the situation is ripe for a movement of national liberation? In what form should it first be manifested? Because the various means whereby decolonization has been carried out have appeared in many different aspects, reason hesitates and refuses to say which is a true decolonization, and which is a false. We shall see that for a man who is in the thick of the fight it is an urgent matter to decide on the means and the tactics to employ: that is to say, how to conduct and organize the movement. If this coherence is not present there is only a blind will toward freedom, with the terribly reactionary risks which it entails. (Fanon, 1968, pp. 58–59)

Clearly, decolonization is a complicated phenomenon, one in which Africa's perplexing class politics and, in specific, the peculiar politics of Africa's colonized classes, plays itself out, though not without the eager, ever-watchful eyes and wicked intentions of various colonial-capitalist bourgeoisies, European or otherwise (S. Amin, 1980; S. Amin and Cohen, 1977; S. Katz, 1980; Kebede, 2004; Magubane and Ntalaja, 1983; Staniland, 1968). The wretched of the earth's revolutionary intellectual-activists, therefore, not only have to decolonize the world the colonizers made—and, "the colonizer's model of the world," as James Blaut (1993) perceptively put it—but also, the world the begrudging racially colonized bourgeoisie deeply wishes and desperately wants to make. False decolonization is, quite simply, the "fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets" that Fanon made mention of above. Absolutely nothing accept for the color of the colonizers' *skins* (and, maybe, just maybe their *masks*) will have changed. "There's nothing," fumed Fanon, "save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag waving: and down there at the bottom an undivided mass, still living in the middle ages, endlessly marking time." Fanon's concept of revolutionary decolonization, therefore, makes a distinction between the class politics and class projects of the racially colonized bourgeoisie and the wretched of the earth. From this critical Fanonian frame of reference, it can be ascertained that decolonization is not neutral and, consequently, not always automatically in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. There are different directions that decolonization can take, just as there are different, extremely devious directions that colonialism (*and capitalism and racism and sexism*) can take, and the racially colonized

bourgeoisie seeks to initiate and establish a neocolonial nation-state by means of a *bourgeois decolonization*—that is, decolonization in the interests of the racially colonized bourgeoisie who, to strike the iron while it is hot, want nothing other than to further *underdevelop* “their” countries in the imperial interests of the upper and middle classes (i.e., the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie) of the “mother country” and, especially, foreign capitalist corporations and conglomerates. Not to be fooled by African colonial elites’ false decolonization, which is nothing other than another name for Eurocentric imperial *recolonization*, Fanon (1968) disparages the racially colonized bourgeoisie’s concept of decolonization, its false decolonization, by emphasizing the interconnection and intersection of their imperial interests with those of the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie of the European “mother country”:

The national bourgeoisie will be greatly helped on its way toward decadence by the Western bourgeoisie, who come to it as tourists avid for the exotic, for big game hunting, and for casinos. The national bourgeoisie organizes centers of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie. Such activity is given the name tourism, and for the occasion will be built up as a national industry. . . . [A]ll these are the stigma of this depravation of the national middle class. Because it is bereft of ideas, because it lives to itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that nation, the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe. (pp. 153–154)

The dialectics of revolutionary decolonization is simultaneously aimed at the concreteness of the colonial past and the possibilities of the postcolonial future and, for all its openness it remains, like all dialectics, preoccupied with both internal and external contradictions, which means, as we have witnessed above, that it is as critical of the pseudo-bourgeoisie in neocolonial Africa as it is of the super-bourgeoisies in Europe and America. The dialectics of revolutionary decolonization, thus, is grounded in, and grows out of, the crossroads where the concreteness of the colonial past and the possibilities of the postcolonial future converge, the place where world-historical facts meet racial colonial fictions, the place where the wretched of the earth, through their “true” decolonization, begin the process(es) of freeing themselves from the claws and confines of white supremacist colonialism (and capitalism). I observed above that “true” decolonization critically engages the proponents and opponents, as well as the agents and adversaries of revolutionary social, political, and cultural transformation; this is necessary because of the constraints of racial colonial history: the fact, namely, that the historical narratives of racially colonizing countries—dare

I say racially colonizing continents—by default dehumanizes the racially colonized; the racial colonial (mis)education system, which the racially colonized find very difficult to get around if they desire to be “successful” and survive in the racial colonial world, brainwashes them and their children into believing that Europe and Europeans—nay, as Du Bois (1995a) declared, “white folk”—are quite literally “super-men” and “world-mastering demi-gods” (p. 456; see also Rabaka, 2006c, 2007a, 2007b, 2010, forthcoming). Is it any wonder, then, that racial colonialism and racist capitalism implant a deep and pervasive sense of inferiority into the consciousnesses of the racially colonized, who get caught in the tangled web of undeniable intraracial antagonisms and curious transethnic kinships, bitter battles, and concealed complicity? Is it any wonder that these same racially colonized social agents, who seem to live their lives on the brink of the most excruciating schizophrenia (how could it be otherwise?), are (true to their double-conscious racial colonial condition) simultaneously capable of the narrowest nationalism and most heartfelt radical humanism, unrepentant religious intolerance and openness to agnosticism, ethnic chauvinism and deep commitment to critical multiculturalism, and, searing selfishness and draw-dropping selflessness (Hanley, 1976; JanMohamed, 1984, 1985, 1988; Kebede, 2004; Lazarus, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2005a; T. O. Moore, 2005; Ngugi, 1972, 1983).

It is important for the wretched of the earth’s revolutionary intellectual-activists to redefine revolutionary decolonization for their specific struggle, always keeping in mind that colonialism and capitalism, as with racism and sexism, are always and ever changing, which is to say, that each of the aforementioned are extremely malleable and motive, constantly shifting from one epoch or milieu to the next. Fanon’s distinction between “true” and “false” decolonization provides an important paradigm and critical theoretical point of departure, one that enables the wretched of the earth to gauge whether “true” decolonization has taken, or is actually taking place. With this in mind, we are compelled to briefly—albeit *critically*—examine Fanon’s concept of revolutionary decolonization.

For Fanon (1968) decolonization is “a program,” “a historical process,” and a “period” which follows neither laws nor logic that can be comprehended by either “the colonizer” or “the colonized” a priori, that is, prior to its emergence (pp. 36, 43, 36). It overturns every “thing,” nothing survives unaltered (pp. 36–37). Decolonization is “quite simply the replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men” (p. 35). It is part of a “historical process” that can and will end only when the entire “colonial world,” that is, the “whole social structure,” is “changed from the bottom up” (pp. 36, 37, 35). However, revolutionary decolonization goes a lot further, and cuts considerably deeper into the social setting. It, in a word, “influences” not merely the social setting but also those individuals who undertake it or, rather, experience it.

Fanon tells us that just as revolutionary decolonization changes the "whole social structure," it also alters and "influences individuals," it "modifies them fundamentally": "the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself" (pp. 36–37). For, revolutionary decolonization, at minimum, "is the veritable creation of new men," who speak a "new language" to express their "new humanity" (p. 36). But, it should be underscored, the "new men" that Fanon envisioned were not merely racially colonized males. Quite the contrary, he included "the colonizers" or "the settlers," as well as the females of both of these "two forces ['the colonized' and 'the colonizers'], opposed to each other by their very nature" (p. 36).<sup>16</sup> Fanon wrote: "The need for this change [revolutionary decolonization] exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men *and* women who are colonized. But the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another 'species' of men and women: the colonizers" (pp. 35–36, my emphasis).<sup>17</sup>

In an anarchic moment, in many respects reminiscent of the Russian revolutionary, Mikhail Bakunin, Fanon sternly stated: "Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder" (p. 36). It is by and through this "period" of "complete disorder" that Fanon claims racially colonized people finally have the opportunity to question "the colonizers," "the colonial world," and, perhaps most importantly, themselves: "In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation" (p. 37). This "complete calling in question of the colonial situation" opens the colonized and the colonizing peoples to the potential and possibilities that they—by and for themselves—have of (re)creating and (re)constructing selves and societies predicated on "[t]otal liberation" (pp. 43, 310).

"Total liberation" entails freedom, and the freedom which Fanon dialectically envisioned had a double dimension: it is at once sociopolitical and personal. With regard to the former, Fanon has in mind the freedom of the nation-state and/or governmental apparatus. Concerning the later, he envisioned an *existential freedom*, which refers to an individual's consciousness of their freedom and free choice. The Fanonian concept of freedom bitterly understands that "[t]he starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays" and that she or he has "nothing to lose and everything to gain," and for this reason, in the past where "they [the 'peasants'] were completely irresponsible; today they mean to understand everything and make all decisions" (p. 61, 94). The freedom Fanon envisaged is one where the "peasants" and politicians are one and the same because all citizens know and critically understand that "[n]obody, neither leader nor rank-and-filer, can hold back the truth" (p. 199). And, "the truth," according to Fanon, "is that which hurries on

the break-up of the colonialist regime" (p. 50). He went far to put his faith in "the people" in full view when he wrote, "[e]verything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand" (p. 189). However, here Fanon is quick to offer a caveat: "You will not be able to do all this [i.e., decolonize and attain and maintain revolutionary freedom] unless you give the people some political education" (p. 180).

Freedom in the public and personal spheres requires the absence of external and coercive control over the State (Gramsci, 1971, 1977, 1978; Kipfer, 2004). It is in this sense that Fanon (1968), especially in "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," criticizes antidemocratic, single party, tsarist, militarist, fascist, dictatorial, and puppet politics in post-independence "underdeveloped" countries (pp. 148–205).<sup>18</sup> Through the lens and lessons of history and betrayal, and perhaps following Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah (1965) would later write about and term this phenomenon in so-called Third World politics: "neocolonialism." Colonialism remained just that, "colonialism," merely mutating into "its final and perhaps most dangerous stage" (Nkrumah, 1965, p. ix). It, colonialism, quite simply, went by another name, and Du Bois, Fanon, Nkrumah, Cabral, and a whole host of anticolonial Africana (among other) thinkers have expressed and offered bits and pieces of the truth and reality of this matter. Nkrumah comprehended that "[n]eo-colonialism is by no means exclusively an African question" (p. xvii). Quite the contrary, Nkrumah contended:

Long before it was practiced on any large scale in Africa it was an established system in other parts of the world. Nowhere has it proved successful, either in raising living standards or in ultimately benefiting the countries which have indulged in it. Marx predicted that the growing gap between the wealth of the possessing classes and the workers it employs would ultimately produce a conflict fatal to capitalism in each individual capitalist State. This conflict between the rich and the poor has now transferred on to the international scene, but for proof of what is acknowledged to be happening it is no longer necessary to consult the classical Marxist writers. (p. xvii)

"[I]t is no longer necessary to consult the classical Marxist writers," because the "classical Marxist writers," in all their prescience and ranting and raving about "revolution" and social transformation, never fully figured, nor felt they needed to critically figure into their analyses, the "classical" or contemporary situations and circumstances of the racialized and colonized world. That is precisely why, following Renate Zahar (1974), Lewis Gordon (1995b) correctly observes that "although Fanon was more in line with Marxist-Leninism," his contribution(s) to Marxist, and particularly "Western Marxist," discourse and theory "was more as an innovator, not a disciple" (p. 93). It was not long after Nkrumah (1973b) wrote, "for proof of



what is acknowledged to be happening it is no longer necessary to consult the classical Marxist writers," that he, ousted from his presidency in Ghana in 1966, turned to, and drew from Fanon, and, in no uncertain terms, stated sternly: "There is no middle road between capitalism and socialism" (p. 74; see also Nkrumah, 1970b, 1973a, 1973c, 1990). For Nkrumah, as for Fanon, decolonization, and all that it entails, is a necessary *means* if "the wretched of the earth" (in Fanon's phraseology) or "the oppressed and exploited of the earth" (in Nkrumah's terminology) are to reach the *end* of both colonial and neocolonial exploitation, alienation, and oppression, and usher in the ugly-beauty, the blasphemous-divinity of "total liberation" (Fanon, 1968, 310; Nkrumah, 1973b, 74). Gordon, following Zahar (1974), asserts that Fanon was no mere card-carrying, party-preaching Marxist-Leninist, but "more . . . an innovator" within the worlds of Marxist and liberation theory. One of Fanon's major innovations and contributions to the discourses of Marxism, liberation theory, and Africana critical theory was his articulation of revolutionary decolonization.

Although many of the major Fanon scholars and critics hardly discuss his concept of *revolutionary decolonization*, and make little or no distinction between "true" and "false" decolonization, it has been and remains one of Fanon's most pervasive, profound, and provocative contributions to psychoanalytic, social, political, postcolonial, and postmodern theory. With regard to Marxism, Fanon's articulation of revolutionary decolonization enabled him to do precisely what he advocated others engaging and enduring "the colonial problem" do, stretch it, "slightly." The classic line, it will be recalled, reads: "Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem" (Fanon, 1968, p. 40). Fanon, specifically in "Concerning Violence," literally augments and updates Marxist theory, and appropriates those aspects and elements from it which he believed would enable him to "call into question the colonial situation"—that is, begin "the historical process" of revolutionary decolonization (pp. 36–37). By "stretching" "Marxist analysis," Fanon placed a new praxis-promoting critical theory, radical politics, and revolutionary decolonization, not merely on Marxists', but Pan-Africanists', African socialists', African nationalists', black nationalists', existentialists', phenomenologists', and radical humanists' discursive and political agendas.

### FANON'S FURY: RACIAL COLONIAL VIOLENCE, ANTICOLONIAL VIOLENCE, AND THE DISCOURSE ON REVOLUTIONARY DECOLONIZATION

Fanon first broached the subject of the inferiority complex that racial colonialism instills in the racially colonized in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Racial

colonialism and the racially colonized person's inferiority complex was something that he more or less psychologized in his early work, pointing to the profundity of the racial colonial problem and the racially colonized's double-conscious racial colonial condition as a result of the problem (P. Adams, 1970; Bulhan, 1980a, 1985; T. O. Moore, 2005; Razanajao, Postel, and Allen, 1996; Ysern-Borras, 1985). With *The Wretched of the Earth*, written a decade after *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon believed that he had found an extremely important part of the solution to the racial colonial problem and the racially colonized's acute inferiority complex: *self-defensive, humanity-affirming* and *human dignity-asserting anticolonial violence*. Though it has long rubbed many of Fanon's readers the wrong way, few can deny how intriguing his views on self-defensive anticolonial violence are; in a sense, they provide a leitmotif for critically comprehending *A Dying Colonialism*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and most of essays in *Toward the African Revolution*, which is to say, the bulk of his body of work.

Few have understood, or engaged critically, Fanon's concept of revolutionary decolonization, its advocacy of self-defensive anticolonial violence, or otherwise. When he is read, as mentioned above, he is often read as "a philosopher of violence," but—similar to Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, the Black Armed Guard, the Revolutionary Action Movement, the Republic on New Afrika, the Black Panther Party, and the Us Organization—Frantz Fanon cannot and should not be allowed to be reduced to a few misquoted statements concerning counter- or self-defensive anticolonial violence (S. Brown, 2003; Joseph, 2006a, 2006b; Ogbar, 2004; Rabaka, 2002, 2008b; Singh, 2004). In point of fact, "colonialism" is frequently a code word for a complex kind of *violence*, of *barbarity*, of *savagery*, of *sadism* that plays itself out in the heads and hearts, in the lives and homelands of both the racially colonized and the racial colonizer. However, the racially colonized and the racial colonizer approach violence in two completely different, yet deeply interconnected, ways. On the one hand, the racial colonizer introduces the colonized to *colonial violence*, and this is a point that should be strongly stressed. Even so, we must be clear here to highlight the historical fact that violence existed long before the colonizer came to conquer the colonized. What makes the white colonizer's violence different from the preexisting precolonial violence is the fact that the white colonizer's violence is *racial colonial violence*: violence for the sake of racial colonialism, and, more specifically, violence for the express imperial purposes of racialization and colonization. The racially colonized, on the other hand, engage in self-defensive antiracist and anticolonialist violence in reaction to the white colonizer's racial colonial violence, that is, to counter the white colonizer's racial colonial violence.

The racially colonized comes to realize that racial colonialism has its own code of ethics, or *etiquette of anti-ethics*, if you will. The racial colonizer

cannot and does not under any circumstance acknowledge the humanity or right to self-determination of the racially colonized, because to do so would completely undermine the bad faith and faux legitimacy of racial colonialism, which has been established on the imperial assumption that the racially colonized, left to their precolonial political systems and social organizations, are utterly incapable of governing themselves. What is more, insofar as the racially colonized does not forfeit their rightful claim to self-determination and resist the imposition of racial colonial rule, the racial colonial nation-state, that is, the racial colonial government, the exportation of European imperial social and political models and Eurocentric modes of existence cannot be guaranteed to take root (Memmi, 1967, 1969, 1984, 2000). In order to plant the seeds of European imperial social and political models and Eurocentric modes of existence, the racial colonizer employs various forms of violence, overt and covert kinds of violence, physical and psychological varieties of violence, to quarantine the racially colonized to the world(s) of white supremacist colonial capitalism. Fanon contended that no matter how benevolent the racial colonizer might appear, the reality of the racial colonial matter is that he or she will not recognize the human rights of the racially colonized or, in the event that some semblances of the humanity of the racially colonized are acknowledged, the racial colonizer will not permit it unless the acknowledgment simultaneously perpetuates the continued devaluation and humiliation of the humanity of the racially colonized. In other words, racial colonialism is willing to make certain concessions or exceptions to its racist rules, but these concessions with the racially colonized, usually with the racially colonized bourgeoisie, are few and far between.

It is primarily because of colonialism's violent denial of the racially colonized's humanity and history that Fanon argued that the wretched of the earth *must* rescue and reclaim their humanity and history from the dark, dank dungeon that the racial colonizer has confined it to, and completely topple the racial colonial world. The racially colonized, therefore, must be mentally and physically prepared to *violate* the "dividing line[s]"—social, political, cultural, metaphysical, physical, epistemological, and ethical—imposed by the racial colonizer if they are to "return to the upwards paths of their own culture," as Cabral contended, and in like fashion, as Fanon importantly asserted, *rehumanize* the racial colonizer and return them to their long-lost humanity as well (Cabral, 1979, p. 143; Fanon, 1968, p. 38; see also Bernasconi, 1996, and "form" 5, "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism," in the present volume). In *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy*, Tsenay Serequeberhan (1994) importantly emphasized:

[T]he fundamental concern of the colonized is to retake the initiative of history: to again become historical Being. It is to *negate the negation* of its lived

historicalness and overcome the violence of merely being an object in the historicity of European existence that the colonized fights. Thus, it is the inter-implicative dialectic of this primordial violence, and the counter-violence it evokes, that we need to concretely grasp. (p. 57, all emphasis in original)

Heeding the words of Serequeberhan, and employing his caveat as my point of departure, what I seek to do here is to “concretely grasp” the role and relevance of self-defensive antiracist and anticolonial violence in the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization. It must be underscored at the outset that the first sentence of Fanon’s last book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, reads: “National liberation, national consciousness, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, *decolonization is always a violent phenomenon*” (1968, p. 35, emphasis added). From Fanon’s perspective, that the racially colonized turn to self-defensive antiracist and anticolonial violence should shock no one, least of all the brutish racial colonizers and their reprehensibly racializing and colonizing nation-states. Racial colonialism, the whole racial colonial system, which is to say, the entire white supremacist colonial capitalist world, is nothing other than naked violence: violence in its most vulgar and vicious forms. Violence is not simply physical; there are also psychological dimensions to violence. What is more, racial colonial violence is extremely predatory and pervasive and seeks to racialize and colonize as many aspects of the racially colonized’s life-worlds and lived-experiences, as many elements of their history and culture, as it inhumanly and possibly can: from politics to economics, education to religion, psychology to social organization, aesthetics to ethics, and on and on into oblivion.

Recall, Fanon (1968) contended that it is the racial colonizer who “is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native” (p. 38). All that we know as “Europe” and “European” has been, and remains, established on “the negation” of the lives, lands, languages, cultures, histories, and, therefore, the humanity of the non-European/nonwhite world (see Blaut, 1993; Chinweizu, 1975, 1987; Mudimbe, 1988, 1994; Said, 1979, 1993). The racially colonized, “back . . . to the wall . . . knife . . . at [their] throat[s],” realizes that there exists but one way out of the wicked, white supremacist colonial world “the settlers” have made, and that is “gun in hand,” “ready for violence at all times” (Fanon, 1968, pp. 58, 37). Fanon went further: “The native who decides to put the program [of revolutionary decolonization] into practice, and to become its moving force, is ready for violence at all times. From birth it is clear to him that this narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called in question by absolute violence” (p. 37).

Under the auspices of the program of revolutionary decolonization, a struggle, one of “absolute violence,” a “murderous and decisive struggle

between the two protagonists [the racially colonized and the racial colonizers]" thus ensues (p. 37). No "thing" remains as it was prior to this "struggle," which, of course, is why the violence of this struggle is characterized as "absolute." Absolute—meaning "total," "complete," "unconditional," and "infinite"—the violence of this "murderous and decisive struggle" alters all that was, and opens the oppressed, and, by default, the oppressors, to the possibility and potential of that which *should have been*, and that which they—meaning, both the racially colonized and the racial colonizers—begin to critically understand *ought to be*. The racially colonized, again, "back . . . to the wall . . . knife . . . at [their] throat[s]," know that they have no other recourse but to fight for their liberty, and on behalf, and in the interests of their long denied (but, not by any means "lost") humanity. The racially colonized knows that the world in which she or he has, literally, been *flung* into, a "narrow world, strewn with prohibitions," is a world predicated on the primordial violence of white supremacist colonialism. Racial colonialism is, quite simply, "violence in its natural state" (p. 61). It was violence, "absolute violence," which marked the beginning of racial colonial conquest, and it shall be nothing other than violence, "absolute violence," which will symbolize and signify the death and the obituary of racial colonial conquest. The form(s) that the racially colonized's self-defensive antiracist and anticolonial violence takes is not in any way predetermined by the racial colonial violence of the racial colonizer. Racial colonial violence, ironically, opens the racially colonized to new versions of violence, violence heretofore unimagined in the precolonial (and, dare I say, *preracial*) world (Gines, 2003; Gueddi, 1991; Kebede, 2001; Makuru, 2005; Seshadri-Crooks, 2002).

Concerning the initial encounter between the racially colonized and the racial colonizers, Fanon (1968) wrote: "Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons" (p. 36). The racially colonized's history, culture, social and political systems, language, religion, art, and "customs of dress," are supplanted, literally *deracinated*—that is, plucked or torn up or out by the roots; eradicated or exterminated—so as to make racial colonialism, "violence in its natural state," complete, total, or "absolute," as Fanon would have it. Commenting on the "break up," that is, the antiracist and anticolonial revolutionary decolonization of the white supremacist colonial capitalist world, Fanon critically commented:

The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and

taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into forbidden quarters. To wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action which is very clear, very easy to understand and which may be assumed by each one of the individuals which constitute the colonized people. (pp. 40–41)

Fanon, unlike many Marxist theorists, did not ascribe fixed and fast roles to specific social and political economic classes: revolutionary decolonization, he declared, “may be assumed by each one of the individuals which constitute the colonized people.” Where Marx thought certain social and political economic classes, take, for example, the “lumpenproletariat,” were a “dangerous class” and “social scum” whose “conditions of life prepare it for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue” (Marx and Engels, 1978, p. 482).<sup>19</sup> Fanon (1968), on the other hand, argued that “the lumpenproletariat, that horde of starving men [and women], uprooted from their tribe and from their clan, constitutes one of the most spontaneous and most radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people” (129; see also C. F. Peterson, 2007; C. J. Robinson, 1993; Sekyi-Otu, 1996; Wallerstein, 1979). This is because the racially colonized lumpenproletariat constitute a class who constantly have to do without the most basic human needs, and whose members are systematically denied entrée into the most minuscule so-called benevolences and benefits of racial colonialism and Eurocentric imperial modernity. Their lives, their excruciating existences serve as a constant and cruel reminder that the racially colonized bourgeoisie is nothing other than a bunch of buck-dancing and bootlicking neocolonial carpetbaggers whose pseudo-lavish Eurocentric lifestyles accentuate the gross political and economic injustices of the established racial colonial order (Farber, 1981; Memmi, 2006; Sabbagh, 1982; Staniland, 1968; G. A. Thomas, 1999).

The racially colonized lumpenproletariat’s lives also painfully point to the fact that their relationships with their precolonial history and culture have been brutally ruptured, which is one of the reasons Fanon wrote that they have been “uprooted from their tribe and from their clan.” The “tribe” and the “clan” symbolize the racially colonized lumpenproletariat’s precolonial history and culture, their precolonial political systems and social organizations, and, though Marx may have thought of them as a bunch of mindless mercenaries, Fanon believed that they could potentially represent “one of the most spontaneous and most radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people.” Why? Because the racially colonized lumpenproletariat, long locked out of the racial colonial world that both the European bourgeoisie and the colonized African bourgeoisie greedily share, constitute the group farthest away from the crumbs that fall from racial colonialism’s imperial table. Their relationship with European modernity, which is to say,

their relationship with the evil evolution of Europe's antiblack racist capitalism and white supremacist colonialism, has been and remains a violent one marked by the barbarity and savagery of the so-called Christian and civilized nations that conquered and racially colonized them.

For Fanon (1968), violence "ruled over" the racial colonial world, and it alone was "absolute." It was the most pervasive characteristic of racial colonialism, and no one and no "thing" went unscathed. In fact, the "government" that the "governing race" and "classes" erected can be, and has been, described as a "reign of violence" (pp. 40, 88). Because violence was the "absolute," "ordering" and organizing principle of the racial colonial world, Fanon felt that only "greater violence" could and would bring "disorder" long enough to forge a new (antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist) world: racial "colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence" (p. 61). Therefore, the antiracist and anticolonialist violence of the racially colonized is nothing other than the long overdue answer to the conundrum that the primordial violence of racial colonial conquest has, and continues to present to the wretched of the earth, who are, I should reiterate, the masses of the earth. The racially colonized, through antiracist and anticolonialist violence, intend to "wreck" or "break up" the established order of the white supremacist colonial capitalist world (pp. 40–41). Once again Serequeberhan (1994) offers important insights:

The first act of freedom that the colonized engages in is the attempt to *violently* disrupt the "normality" which European colonial society presupposes. The tranquil existence of the colonizer is grounded on the chaotic, abnormal, and subhuman existence of the colonized. The "new societies" that replicate Europe in the non-European world are built on "vacated space" which hitherto was the uncontested *terra firma* of different and differing peoples and histories.

The dawn and normalcy of colonial society—i.e., the birth and establishment of the modern European world, as Karl Marx approvingly points out in the first few pages of the *Communist Manifesto*—is grounded on the negation of the cultural difference and specificity that constitutes the historicity and thus humanity of the non-European world. European modernity establishes itself globally by violently negating indigenous cultures. This violence in replication, furthermore, accentuates the regressive and despotic/aristocratic aspects internal to the histories of the colonizing European societies. (p. 58, emphasis in original)

The imposition of European "normality" onto non-European lives and lands signals and symbolizes the very terms, the very grounds upon which the "murderous and decisive struggle" between the oppressed and their oppressors is fought. As Fanon (1968) contended: "The cause is the

consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (p. 40). To take this line of thinking a step further, it could be said that *one is human because one is white, and that one is white insofar as one is human*. By negating the history of the racially colonized, the racial colonizers also negate the identity, and therefore the humanity of the conquered peoples. Serequeberhan (1994) maintains that "[t]he colonized is a member of a defeated history" (p. 69). By this, I take him to mean two things. First, that the racially colonized is a member of a group that has suffered a historical defeat. And, second, that the racially colonized's history, "the process of his communal becoming," has been violently suspended or "interrupted" and, from the racial colonial point of view, definitively (p. 69).

In "defeating" or conquering the racially colonized, the racial colonizer also "defeated" and conquered the historicity—that is, the lived and concrete actuality, the unique life-worlds and life-struggles—of the racially colonized. The racially colonized no longer comes into being, or becomes a *human being* on her or his own terms, she or he only registers on the record of "History" (i.e., "human history") when and where the racial colonizers allow her or him to do so; which, to be perfectly honest, is rarely, if ever. Further, when and where the racially colonized does rear her or his head in "History," she or he is painted, at best, as a "subhuman" "savage," "a sort of quintessence of evil," or, at worst, the "native," nonhuman "thing" discussed earlier (Fanon, 1968, 41; see also Jordan, 1977; Pieterse, 1992). This in turn creates a "situation," a "world" where there exists two "'species' of men [and women]": those who are white, European, and human and, as a consequence, have human rights which are to be respected and protected; and, those who are racialized, colonized, non-European, nonwhite and, therefore, *not* human, and have no human rights which are to be respected and protected in a white supremacist colonial capitalist world.<sup>20</sup>

In this world, and in this situation, it is not hard to discern why Fanon would write: "On the logical plane, the Manichaeism of the settler produces a Manichaeism of the native" (p. 93). That is to say that "the native," imbued with the horror and hell of racial colonialism, sets out to decolonize, to, literally, de-center and destroy, the racial colonial world. The racially colonized has no choice. As I have said, the oppressed have few options. Barred by the racial colonizers—and sometimes their own self-negation and self-hatred—from the annals of history, the racially colonized seek nothing less than to reclaim their place on the stage of the miraculous drama of human existence and experience. Hence, Serequeberhan (1994) said: "Conflict and violence are not a choice, they are an existential need negatively arising out of the colonial situation which serves as a prelude to the rehumanization of the colonized" (p. 73). Serequeberhan acknowledges that antiracist and anticolonialist violence is only a "prelude"—that is, it is literally a preface, an introduction, an opening—through which the



racially colonized might step back on to the stage of human history, and (re)construct human being(s) and a humane world where each person critically understands her or his identity and dignity and, therefore, their humanity, to rest on the respect and recognition of other persons' identity and dignity and, therefore, their humanity: this, of course, takes us right back to the discourse on revolutionary humanism which was developed in the previous "form" of Fanonism, "Antiracist Fanonism," and it also points us in the direction of the fifth and final "form" of Fanonism discussed in the present volume, "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism."<sup>21</sup>

As stated above, Fanon (1968) asserted that "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon" (p. 35). This is so because "the agents of [the racial colonial] government speak the language of pure force" (p. 38). It is this "force," this—according to Serequeberhan (1994)—virtual "primordial violence" that spawns the "reactive," or, as I would prefer, *counteractive* violence *contra* not simply the racial colonizers but the internalization of colonialism and racism on the part of the racially colonized and the entire white supremacist colonial capitalist world (p. 73). Recall, Fanon (1968) insisted that it was the racial colonizer who "is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native" (p. 38). What Fanon meant here is that the racial colonizer brought the violence that *white supremacist* or *racial* colonialism is to African and other racially colonized peoples' life-worlds and lived-experiences, thus drawing them, the racially colonized, into Europe's global imperial orbit, which presently includes peoples and continents constitutive of 75 percent of the earth's population and surface (Blaut, 1993; Said, 1979, 1993). With the racial colonizers came violence of such immensity and intensity, such global enormity, that the preexisting precolonial violence on hindsight appears to be no more than mere local or, at most, national skirmishes; scant squabbles that historically have been documented to have been commonplace, and to have plagued human beings in almost every epoch of human history, culture, and civilization.

Racial colonialism is, quite simply, "violence in its natural state," and, this epoch-breaking and epoch-making violence, asserted Fanon (1968), "will only yield when confronted with greater violence" (p. 61). The racially colonized, under these circumstances knows, and especially after enduring centuries of exploitation and alienation at the hands of racial colonialists and the racial colonial system, that she or he has no other recourse: decolonization or (continued) dehumanization. It is at, and in, this momentous moment, the moment the racially colonized commits to, and takes up the banner of revolutionary decolonization, that Fanon contended:

He of whom *they* have never stopped saying that the only language he understands is that of force, decides to give utterance by force. In fact, as always, the settler has shown him the way he should take if he is to become free. The

argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler, and by an ironic turning of the tables it is the native who now affirms that the colonialist understands nothing but force. The colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force and at no time tries to hide this aspect of things. (p. 84, emphasis in original)

What is important to emphasize here is that the "argument the native chooses has been furnished," at least in part, "by the settler"; by the settler's racial colonial actions, by their "force," by their racial colonial violence and, it also needs to be accentuated, by the European liberals' and the white left's antiracist and anticolonialist inaction. That the white left, both of Europe and America, has long practiced a policy of benign and often naked neglect where racial colonies and the racially colonized are concerned, to put it plainly, is nothing new. In fact, if truth be told, white liberals and the white left's policy of benign and naked neglect is perfectly "normal" in the abnormal and absurd white supremacist colonial capitalist world. However, the fact that the racially colonized have appropriated aspects of the white left's (mainly Marxist) arguments might come as a surprise, and especially to those who remain unaware of the long tradition of black radicalism, which, in all political and intellectual honesty, can be said to reach back as far as the Abolitionist and Pan-Africanist movements, and stretch across several centuries to our modern (as well as postmodern) movements for racial, gender, and economic justice.<sup>22</sup> Which aspects of the racially colonized's antiracist and anticolonialist argument(s) have been furnished by the settler, or the settler's metropolitan Marxist siblings? Do the racially colonized uncritically digest the racial colonizers' (again, mostly Marxist and, therefore, anticapitalist) arguments? Can anything of antiracist and anticolonialist value be found in the radical/revolutionary traditions of the racial colonizers' cousins and kinfolk back in the pro-colonial capitalist metropole? This last question begs to be asked and answered, especially considering Audre Lorde's (1984) haunting harangue, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (pp. 110–113).

In our efforts to critically engage Fanon's dialectical contributions to the discourse(s) of Marxism, and in order to critically comprehend his pioneering conception of revolutionary decolonization and its important implications for the deconstruction and reconstruction of critical theory, we would do well to attend to each of the queries above, particularly the latter. In so doing, it may be most helpful to bear in mind Trinidadian historian Tony Martin's contention that there is an explicit indication of Fanon's "affinity to Marx," which is "evident even without a close look at his philosophy." Martin (1999) continues, "The fact [is], for example, that two of his three books bore titles directly suggestive of a conscious identification with Marx: *Les Damnés de la Terre*, which is taken from the first line of the "Internationale" and *L'An Cinq de la Revolution Algerienne* which bears an

obvious similarity to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*" (p. 85). Fanon's revolutionary decolonization, consequently, was informed not only by Pan-Africanism and various strands of African nationalism but also by his critical and ever-evolving relationship with Marxism. This discursive dialogue with Fanon's contributions to critical theory would yield very little if his much-mangled dialectical rapport and critical relationship with Marxism were left in the lurch. Now, therefore, let us examine Fanon's innovative dialectical deconstruction and reconstruction of Marxism in the interests of the racially colonized, which is to say, in the anti-imperialist interests of his most beloved "wretched of the earth," as well as in the interests of deepening and further developing the discourse on Fanonism and the Africana tradition of critical theory.

## NOTES

1. For further discussion of Aime Cesaire, see Arnold (1981), Cismaru (1974), Hale (1974), Irele (1968), Jahn (1958), Kennedy (1968), Marteau (1961), Rabaka (2009), Scharfman (1987), Sellen (1967), Tomich (1979), and Towa (1969a, 1969b).

2. For instance, Madubuike (1975), Mbelelo Ya Mpiku (1971), Melone (1963), Mohome (1968), and Shelton (1964) offer solid critiques of Cesairean Negritude.

3. With regard to the "Fanon biographers," I am thinking here particularly of Cauter (1970), Geismar (1971), and Gendzier (1973). Of course, these are all "early" biographies, but it may prove prudent to note the connection that each of them establishes between Cesaire and Fanon. This, in a sense, has led me to comment upon the contours of, and continuity in Africana critical thought traditions. Please see Rabaka (2009) for further discussion.

4. For more on *Legitimate Defense*, see Fabre (1993), Kesteloot (1991), and M. Richardson (1996).

5. The fact that Cesaire sought a "political solution" to the problem of "cultural desolation" is revealing when we are reminded that Fanon would spend the rest of his shamefully short life seeking "political" and practical solutions to all manner of cultural, social, and political problems.

6. For full-scale treatments Cesaire's literary career, see Arnold (1981), G. Davies (1997), and Scharfman (1987). Hale (1974) and Pallister (1991) provide excellent analyses of both Cesaire's literary and political writings, while M. W. Bailey (1992) and Irele (1968) focus specifically on Cesaire's political plays. Cismaru (1974), B. H. Edwards (2005), Jahn (1958), Kennedy (1968, 1988), Kesteloot (1995), Nesbitt (2000), Tomich (1979), and Towa (1969a, 1969b) are a few of the more noteworthy and seminal articles/essays in Cesaire studies.

7. For further discussion of the fascinating world of surrealism, and for the works that have shaped and shaded my interpretation here, especially of the ways in which surrealism and Negritude conceptually converge and discursively diverge, please see: Balakian (1986); Benedikt (1974); Bohn (2002); Bradley (1997); Breton (1972, 1978,

1993, 2003); Carrouges (1974); Caws (2004); Caws, Kuenzli, and Raaberg (1991); Chadwick (1998); Chenieux-Gendron (1990); Conley (1996); Conley and Taminiaux (2006); Durozoi (2004); Hopkins (2004); Hubert (1994); Levitt (1999); H. Lewis (1988); Mahon (2005); Malt (2004); Nadeau (1989); Picon (1983); Polizzotti (2008); M. Richardson (1996); Richardson and Fijakowski (2001); Spiteri and LaCoss (2003); Strom (2002); Sawin (1997); Tythacott (2003); and Vaneigem (1999).

8. In order to fully understand Negritude, it is important to critically engage France and French citizens' ambivalent relationship with French colonialism (nay, French imperialism) in Africa and the Caribbean. There are all sorts of tall-tales and mythmaking concerning French colonialism—with the most common claim being that the French form of colonialism, when contrasted with that of other European colonial empires (e.g., Belgium, Britain, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain), was somehow more benevolent and not as violent. This, to be perfectly honest and historically accurate, is quite simply not true. Most certainly, it is extremely important to revisit Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, but it is equally important to turn to the scores of scholarly texts produced since these watershed works first exploded the myth of French colonial benevolence. For further, more critical and historically accurate discussions of "French Africa," "French Africans," "Francophone Africa," and French racial colonialism in Africa and the Caribbean, see Genova (2004), Hargreaves (2005), Kent (1992), Laroussi and Miller (2003), R. Lewis (1971), S. K. Lewis (2006), Manning (1998), C. L. Miller (1985, 1990, 1998), McCormack (2007), Salhi (2003), Serrano (2005), Stovall and Van den Abbeele (2003), Suret-Canale (1971), D. Thomas (2002), Valensi (1977), and G. Wilder (2003a, 2003c, 2005).

9. On Césaire's Negritude as a "revolutionary negritude," see Rabaka (2009), Serequeberhan (1996, p. 245), Towa (1969a), and G. Wilder (2004). For a discussion of Negritude in relation to Marxism, surrealism, and existentialism, see Eshelman and Smith (1983, pp. 3–8, 14–18), Finn (1988, pp. 40–57), Kesteloot (1991, pp. 19–46, 102–19, 253–79), Knight (1974), and Sellen (1967).

10. See Engels (1972). For a critique of Engels's "feminism," see A. Lane (1976).

11. See Marx and Engels (1972). For a critique of Marx's procolonial stance, see Said (1979, pp. 153–57) and Serequeberhan (1990).

12. For a discussion of Negritude's implications for African identity, and especially in relation to the onslaught of European imperialism, see A. Diop (1962), Drachler (1963), and Wylie (1985).

13. Here I am, of course, hinting at what has been called "settler colonialism." My analysis here does not in any way wish to negate the historical fact that many of the racial colonizers have roots in the working classes of their respective European "mother countries" and that they were, indeed, economically exploited. I simply seek to highlight the diabolic dialectical relationship between *the white colonizers' prosperity* and *the nonwhite colonized's poverty*. Too often this dialectic has been brushed aside in favor of discussions of white colonizers as bringers of "civilization" and Christianity, and the "great hardships" and "sacrifices" they endured to "save" the lost souls of the racially colonized. However, it is important to reiterate that whatever "good" or "positives" the racial colonizers may have brought to the lives, lands, and labor they racially colonized, these "goods" or "positives" are a sorry substitute or, rather, are *not* an adequate excuse, and certainly *not* a morally justifi-

able reason for the centuries-spanning violence, exploitation, and oppression that racially colonized people (i.e., the wretched of the earth) have endured in the world of white supremacist colonial capitalism. For further discussion of "settler colonialism" and the ways in which white workers, both in the colonies and in the "mother countries," profit(ed) from the racial colonization of nonwhites, as well as the texts which have influenced my interpretation here, please see: Coombes (2006), Elkins and Pedersen (2005), Falola (2005), Ginio (2006), Jabbour (1970), Jarrett (1996), Lovejoy and Falola (2003), Mamdani (1996), P. H. Russell (2006), Utete (1978), and Wolfe (1999).

14. Beyond Fanon's analysis, my interpretation of white religion, especially white Christianity, being utilized as a weapon in the interests of white supremacist colonial capitalism has been influenced by: Burris (2001), Chidester (1996), Daughton (2006), Elbourne (2002), Iwe (1979), and Saakana (1996). For a discussion of the ways in which Islam has been employed for imperial purposes, see R. Peters (1979). And, for an analysis of the ways in which indigenous African religions have been contracted for colonial causes, please see Shelton (1971).

15. In the subsequent section, as well as in the succeeding "form" of Fanonism, "Marxist Fanonism," I discuss the European and European American bourgeoisies' reprehensible ruling of, and repugnant relationship with white supremacist colonial capitalism. There I, also, accent the ways in which colonial African elites and bourgeois bureaucrats seek to siphon a larger share of the profits of white supremacist colonialism for themselves by bamboozling the African proletariat and peasantry into believing that their bourgeois, "false" decolonization, that is, their neocolonialism, is "true" decolonization.

16. For example, Bergner (1995, 1999), Chow (1999), Decker (1990), Dubey (1998), Faulkner (1996), Gopal (2002), Mann (2004), McClintock (1995), Rabaka (2009), Sekyi-Otu (1996), Sharpley-Whiting (1997), and Vasavithasan (2004) discuss Fanon's (however contradictory) inclusion of females and his "male-feminism." Sharpley-Whiting's (1997) work is particularly noteworthy in this regard, as it was the first, and remains the only, book-length treatment of Fanon's "feminism" and contributions to women and gender studies. Greater discussion is given to Fanon's contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation in the fourth "form" of Fanonism, "Feminist Fanonism," engaged in the present volume.

17. For a discussion of the special uses to which Fanon employed "dramatic" language, see Kang (2004) and Sekyi-Otu (1996). And, on Fanon's uses of both the spectacular and visual in his descriptions of decolonization, see Kaplan (1999) and Kawash (1999).

18. For further discussion of Fanon's comments on, and criticisms of, "antidemocratic," among other, political trends, see Adam (1974, 1999), N. Gibson (1999d), E. Hansen (1974, 1977), Jinadu (1973, 1986), and Sekyi-Otu (1996).

19. For further discussion of Marxist-Leninist conceptions of the proletariat and lumpenproletariat, and for the works which have influenced my analysis here, see Balibar (1977, 1994, 1995), Briefs (1937), Draper (1987), Ehrenberg (1992), Kautsky (1964), Lenin (1932, 1976), A. Lewis (1911), Lovell (1988), Ti. McCarthy (1978), Perkins (1993), and Wessell (1979). I should also direct my readers to the following "form" of Fanonism, entitled "Marxist Fanonism—Toward a Critical Theory of White Supremacist Colonial Capitalism: Fanon's Critique, Appreciation,

Appropriation, and Modification of Marxism in the Interests of Revolutionary Decolonization and Revolutionary Re-Africanization," where I develop a more detailed discussion of Fanon(ism) and Marx(ism)'s conceptual convergences and discursive divergences with regard to the European proletariat and lumpenproletariat and the African proletariat, lumpenproletariat, and peasantry.

20. My thinking along these lines has been indelibly influenced by the Caribbean philosopher Charles W. Mills, among others, see C. W. Mills (1997, 1998, 2001, 2003a, 2003b), as well as Fashina (1989), Ibish (2002), Maldonado-Torres (2002, 2007), McDade (1971), Sullivan (2004), and Sullivan and Tuana (2007).

21. For engagements of notions of identity and personality in Africana literature, see Drachler (1963), Hennessey (1992), Irele (1990a), Kanneh (1998), C. L. Miller (1990), Mazrui, Okpewho and Davies (1999), Wauthier (1967), and Wylie (1985).

22. My argument here has been deeply influenced by the incomparable work of Samir Amin (1974, 1976, 1977, 1978b, 1980, 1989, 1990b, 1997, 1998b, 2003, 2004, 2006) and Walter Rodney (1963, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1976, 1981, 1990).

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## Marxist Fanonism

### Toward a Critical Theory of White Supremacist Colonial Capitalism: Fanon's Critique, Appreciation, Appropriation, and Modification of Marxism in the Interests of Revolutionary Decolonization and Revolutionary Re-Africanization

I do not carry innocence to the point of believing that appeals to reason or to respect for human dignity can alter reality. For the Negro who works on a sugar plantation in Le Robert [Martinique], there is only one solution: to fight. He will embark on this struggle, and he will pursue it, not as the result of a Marxist or idealistic analysis but quite simply because he cannot conceive of life otherwise than in the form of a battle against exploitation, misery, and hunger.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (p. 224)

Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem. Everything up to and including the very nature of pre-capitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must here be thought out again.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (p. 40)

Fanon can be considered a Marxist. This is not to say that he adhered rigidly to every word that has come down to us from Marx's pen. He didn't. But he was Marxist in the sense that Lenin or Castro or Mao are Marxist. That is, he accepted Marx's basic analysis of society as given and proceeded from there to elaborate on that analysis and modify it where necessary to suit his own historical and geographical context.

—Tony Martin, "Rescuing Fanon from the Critics" (p. 87)

Fanon can be considered a Marxist-humanist, in the sense that he is not championing a static notion of human nature, but a human "potential" which can be "created by revolutionary beginnings," and where social relationships give meaning to life.

—Nigel Gibson, "Fanon and the Pitfalls of Cultural Studies" (p. 117)

## THE SOMETIMES SUBTLE, AND SOMETIMES NOT SO SUBTLE WHITE SUPREMACISM OF MARXIST EUROCENTRISM

Along with racism and colonialism, Fanon was equally critical of capitalism. As has been the unfortunate fate of many nonwhite intellectual-activists, Fanon's work is usually approached one-dimensionally with an intense emphasis on either his critique of racism in *Black Skin, White Masks*, or his critique of racial colonialism in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Some of Fanon's more sophisticated interpreters and critics have gone so far as to combine his critiques of racism and colonialism, but rarely have his critiques of racism and colonialism been coupled with his critiques of capitalism and Marxism, especially the ways in which racism, colonialism, and capitalism are inextricable and, because of its Eurocentrism and obsession with capitalism, Marxism negates the concrete realities of the interconnections and intersections of racism and colonialism with capitalism in the life-worlds and lived-experiences of the wretched of the earth. Consequently, this "form" of Fanonism, "Marxist Fanonism," offers a reconsideration of Fanon's critiques of capitalism and Marxism with an eye toward the ways in which his work in this area contributes to Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory in general, and the Africana tradition of critical theory in specific.

According to Marxists, capitalism blocks the masses from developing to their fullest potential. It condemns the majority to endure a life of exploitation and alienation, while the minority who own and control the means and modes of production enjoy a life of luxury and leisure at the hardworking majority's expense. Capital is connected to and, literally, creates value in a capitalist society, and it is the minority who own and control the means and modes of production who decide and determine what is valuable and how much value is placed on the products (*their* products, from the minority's point of view) that the majority, the workers or the "proletariat" in the Marxian lexicon, produce (Marx, 1952a, 1967, 1968c, 1970, 1973).<sup>1</sup> We may already be able to detect here why an intellectual-activist with Fanon's temperament and commitments was attracted to Marxism. He saw Marxism as a theory that not only critiqued the ways in which a merciless minority exploited and alienated a majority, but also a theory of revolution that promoted immediate action against exploitation and alienation. It is



the minority who own and control the means and modes of production or, in the Marxian lexicon, it is the "bourgeoisie," who decide and determine what is valuable and how much value is placed on what is produced, and it is their diabolical decisions and determinations that ultimately define and deform the proletariat's life-worlds and lived-experiences. Marx (1971b) mused:

On examination, we notice that capital regulates, according to its need to exploit, this production of the labor force itself, the production of human masses to be exploited. Thus capital does not only produce capital, it also produces a growing mass of workers, the substance thanks to which it can function alone as additional capital. Consequently, not only does labor produce, on an ever-widening scale, the productive wage laborers that it needs. Labor produces its conditions of production as capital, and capital produces labor as a means of realizing capital, as wage labor. Capitalist production is not simply a reproduction of this relationship, it is its reproduction on an ever-increasing scale; and precisely to the extent that, with the capitalist mode of production, the social productivity of labor increases, the wealth over against the worker grows and dominates him as capital. Opposite him is deployed the world of wealth, this world which is alien to him and oppresses him, and his poverty, shame and personal subjection increase in the same proportion. His nakedness is the correlative of this plenitude. At the same time there increases the mass of capital's living means of production: the laboring proletariat. (pp. 119–120)

Where Marx wrote of "the laboring proletariat," Fanon wrote of "the wretched of the earth." The "laboring proletariat" that Fanon wrote and revolutionized on behalf of was not only exploited and alienated by capitalism, but they also endured the violence and vampirism of white supremacist colonialism. Fanon, therefore, could and, indeed, did employ Marxism in his quest to critique capitalism. However, when and where he came to the critique of racism and colonialism, which was almost everywhere in his life-world and lived-experiences, Marxism proved to provide very little. It is here that Fanon and his discourse on revolutionary decolonization most distinguishes itself and makes its major contributions of innovative antiracist, anticolonialist, *and* anticapitalist concepts and categories to Marxism.

Marx's work is generally very vague concerning colonialism, and when and where he did comment on colonialism it was usually peripheral to his primary preoccupation: the critique of capitalism. To their credit, Marx and Engels (1972) did criticize colonialism, but not to the extent, nor with the enthusiastic astuteness, they did capitalism (see also Marx, 1968b). For instance, Marx did acknowledge the interrelation between capitalism, colonialism, and African enslavement, stating: "Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that gave the colonies their value; it is the colonies that created world

trade, and it is world trade that is the pre-condition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance" (Marx and Engels, 1976, p. 167; see also Marx, 1961).

Marx went further to make important connections between "slavery," Europe's racial colonies, and the poverty of the proletariat in Europe, asserting: "While the cotton industry introduced child-slavery into England, in the United States it gave the impulse for the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact the veiled slavery of the wage-laborers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal" (Marx, 1967, vol. 1, p. 925; see also Marx, 1961). The "unqualified slavery of the New World," however, was never given the serious treatment that capitalism, class struggle, and white working-class males' life-worlds and life-struggles received. Racism and colonialism, always and everywhere, seem secondary in Marx's (and Marxists') work. While it is important to acknowledge that Marx made connections between the proletariat of Europe and the racially enslaved and racially colonized proletariat of Europe's colonies, it is also important to point to the inadequacies and underdeveloped nature of his and his disciples' work when and where we come to racism and colonialism, and, more importantly, the interconnections and intersections of racism and colonialism with capitalism. Marx knew that "one nation can grow rich at the expense of another," just as surely as he knew that "one class can enrich itself at the expense of another" (Marx and Engels, 1976, pp. 464–465; see also Marx, 2008). However, he did not take his watershed work one step further to compare and contrast what it would mean for one *race* to "grow rich at the expense of another," or, even more, one *race-class* to "grow rich at the expense of another," especially if that race-class proved to be a minority when compared with the human population of the non-European, non-white world. This is where Africana critical theorist-activists, such as Frantz Fanon, W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, Aime Cesaire, and Amilcar Cabral, among others, collapsed traditional Marxist trends, and created their own unique Africana critical theoretical concepts and categories to critique and crush racism, colonialism, *and* capitalism (Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2009, forthcoming).

### THE PARADOXICAL PREDICAMENT OF THE PAMPERED AND PRIVILEGED WHITE PROLETARIAT

As was discussed in the previous "form" of Fanonism, "Decolonialist Fanonism," capitalists profited from the colonies, indeed, but what is often overlooked in most Marxist discourse is that European and European American workers also benefited from "slavery" and the racial colonies, and that

they were coddled and kept in a depoliticized, almost antiproletariat, bourgeois-friendly position with the very spoils of the white supremacist colonial war that the capitalists waged against racially colonized non-European/nonwhite workers and enslaved persons. It was not Marx, but ironically Engels who acknowledged this curious contradiction:

You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly what they think of any policy—the same as what the middle classes think. There is, after all, no labor party here, only conservatives and liberal-radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies. (Marx and Engels, 1976, p. 322)

Well-ahead of Marxism and the Frankfurt School, as, for instance, W. E. B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* and C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins* eloquently illustrate, insurgent enslaved Africans developed critical antiracist thought-traditions in their efforts to topple white supremacy and cut capitalism and colonialism off at their knees (Du Bois, 1995a; James, 1963). Insurgent enslaved African intellectual-activists sought solutions to social and political problems as passionately and radically as—indeed, even more passionately and radically than—the white working class, who, as the Trinidadian prime minister and Howard University-trained historian Eric Williams (1966) observed in *Capitalism and Slavery*, profited from, were complicit in, and were racially privileged as a result of the very white supremacist and enslaving system dominating and discriminating against blacks and other non-whites. For Marx and the tradition of critical theory his work spawned, the white proletariat was identified as the ideal and essential agents of socialist (and communist) revolution.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, he wrote of the white proletariat's "radical chains" during the epoch of African enslavement and increasing apartheid. In other words, not only did Marx overlook the contributions of the historical actors and herstorical actresses of the black radical tradition, he added insult to injury by referring to the white proletariat's "radical chains" even as enslaved and racially colonized Africans were stoically struggling to break their physical and psychological, unrepentantly and unrelentingly *real* shackles and chains. In his own words:

In the formation of a class with radical chains, a class in civil society that is not a class of civil society, of a social group that is the dissolution of all social groups, of a sphere that has a universal character because of its universal sufferings and lays claim to no particular right, because it is the object of no particular injustice but of injustice in general. This class can no longer lay claim to a historical status, but only to a human one. It is, finally, a sphere that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating these other spheres themselves. In a word, it is the complete loss of humanity and thus can only recover itself by a complete redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society, as a particular class, is the proletariat.

. . . As philosophy finds in the proletariat its material weapons, so the proletariat finds in philosophy its intellectual weapons and as soon as the lightning of thought has struck deep into the virgin soil of the people, the emancipation of the Germans into men will be completed. (Marx, 1971a, p. 127)

Marxian critical theory places its historical ignorance and cultural insensitivity on display when and where it points to the white proletariat's "radical chains," its "universal sufferings," and its enduring of "injustice" without compassionately connecting the white proletariat's deplorable labor sites and despicable living conditions with really and truly enslaved and colonized nonwhite workers around the globe. Marx, indeed, was undeniably right to assert the "universal character" of the white proletariat's lived-experiences and life-struggles. Moreover, when he and Engels wrote, "Workers of the world unite!" many black and other nonwhite radicals took their words seriously and sincerely sought to understand and eradicate the immiseration of white workers. In this sense, many black and other nonwhite workers were able to relate to the immiseration of white workers on account of their own unique lived-experiences and lived-endurances of exploitation and immiseration. In point of fact, then, there is a definite "universal character" to white workers' lived-experiences and life-struggles, which many nonwhite workers are not only willing to compassionately concede but with which they intensely empathize and sincerely seek to eradicate. However, Marx and his adherents were and remain wrong, in fact, repugnantly wrong, to claim that the white proletariat was somehow going to usher in "a complete redemption of humanity" all the while they, too, profited from the labor and products of racially enslaved, racially colonized, and racially segregated nonwhite workers. It is here that we witness the peculiar predicament of the white proletariat: they are actually pampered when and where their labor and living conditions are compared and contrasted with those of the masses of classical and contemporary, modern and postmodern, colonial and neocolonial nonwhite workers.

In order for the white proletariat to really contribute to the "complete redemption of humanity," they must, first and foremost, acknowledge the ways in which they, too, along with the bourgeoisie, have not only benefited from and are complicit in the racial enslavement, colonization, and segregation of nonwhites, workers and otherwise, but they must come to critical consciousness and acknowledge capitalism, colonialism, and racism as overlapping, interlocking and intersecting systems of violence, exploitation, and oppression that perpetuate and exacerbate "the complete loss of humanity." After white workers come to, or are brought to the critical realization of the overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting nature of capitalism, colonialism, and racism, they must take a stern proactive stance against these systems of violence, exploitation, and oppression. As with any

group of radicals and workers, it is not enough for the white proletariat to acknowledge the immiseration and exploitation of nonwhite workers; they must sincerely seek to put an end to injustice, not simply in their own lives but in the lives of others, especially nonwhite others in white supremacist societies.

It is also important for white radicals and white workers to recognize that Marxism is a product of a particular moment in human history where socialist revolution was preconceived, promoted, and planned from a Eurocentric patriarchal colonial perspective and, what is more, all of this can be conceded without in any way repudiating the fact that the Marxist theory of socialist revolution remains one of the most comprehensive anticapitalist and committed-socialist conceptions of revolution contemporary critical theorists have available to them. Identifying this weakness in Marxism and strengthening it with other critical theoretical perspectives, such as radical and revolutionary feminist and womanist theory, critical race theory, critical queer theory, and the discourse on decolonization, among others, has been and remains one of the major tasks of the Africana tradition of critical theory (Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2009).

Usually critical theory is linked to modernity and the European Enlightenment, and "modernity" is only thought of from a Eurocentric point of view—that is, in the aftermath of European imperial expansion around the globe what it means to be "modern" typically translates into how well Europeans and non-Europeans emulate European *imperial* thought, culture, politics, etc. (Abbinnett, 2006; Bartolovich and Lazarus, 2002; Bedford and Irving-Stephens, 2001; Best, 1995; Freedman, 2002; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995; Kellner, 1989; Marx, 2003). However, if one were to call into question Eurocentric and imperial conceptions of what it means to be "modern," then the innovative and alternative concepts and categories of the Africana tradition of critical theory are discursively discovered, and contemporary critical theorists are able to enter into Africana intellectual archeology and observe, perhaps for the first time: first, that it was on the fringes of Europe's imperial free-for-all, in the imperial outposts in the nonwhite world where racism and colonialism were naturalized, where modernity was conceived, and, in some senses, where it was aborted; and, second, that many of modernity's most perplexing problems were initially put forward and keenly considered by non-European, racialized and colonized, indigenous and enslaved intellectual-activists. In *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism*, the Jamaican philosopher Charles W. Mills (2003a) writes poignantly of this paradox and oft ignored predicament, and his penetrating words, consequently, are worth quoting at length:

All the issues we now think of as defining critical theory's concerns were brought home to the racially subordinated, the colonized and enslaved, in the

most intimate and brutal way: the human alienation, the instrumentalization and deformation of reason in the service of power, the critique of abstract individualism, the paradox of reconciling proclamations of humanism with mass murder, the need to harness normative theory to the practical task of human liberation. So if Marx's proletariat too often had to have proletarian consciousness "imputed" (in Georg Lukács infamous phrase) to them, and if the relation between Marxism and the actual working-class outlook was often more a matter of faith and hopeful counterfactuals than actuality (what the workers *would* think if only . . . ), then oppositional ideas on race have shaped the consciousness of the racially subordinated for centuries. If white workers have been alienated from their product, then people of color, especially black slaves, have been alienated from their personhood; if Enlightenment reason has been complicit with bourgeois projects, then it has been even more thoroughly corrupted by its accommodation to white supremacy; if liberal individualism has not always taken white workers fully into account, then it has often excluded nonwhites altogether; if it was a post-World War II challenge to explain how the "civilized" Germany of Goethe and Beethoven could have carried out the Jewish and Romani Holocausts, then it is a far older challenge to explain how "civilized" Europe as a whole could have carried out the savage genocide of indigenous populations and the barbaric enslavement of millions; and, finally, if Marx's proletarians have been called upon to see and lose their chains (and have often seemed quite well-adjusted to them), then people of color (Native American populations, enslaved and later Jim Crowed Africans in the New World, the colonized) have historically had little difficulty in recognizing their oppression—after all, the chains were often literal!—and in seeking to throw it off. So if the ideal of fusing intellectual history with political practice has been the long-term goal of critical class theory, it has been far more frequently realized in the nascent critical race theory of the racially subordinated, whose oppression has been more blatant and unmediated and for whom the urgency of their situation has necessitated a direct connection between the normative and practical emancipation. (p. xviii, emphasis in original)

Critical theories, of which the Marxist and/or Frankfurt School tradition is merely one, are not simply a synthesis of radical politics and social theory, but also a combination of cultural criticism and philosophy of history (historical theory). Each version of critical theory, whether critical race theory or critical class theory, seeks to radically reinterpret and revise history in light of, for example, race and racism for critical race theorists, or capitalism and class struggle for critical class theorists. In order to thoroughly comprehend a given phenomenon, critical theorists believe that one must contextualize it within its historical context, testing and teasing-out tensions between the phenomenon and the cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, aesthetic, and religious, among other, institutions and struggles of its epoch.

Mills makes the point that though white Marxists/critical class theorists have repeatedly revisited the connection(s) between theory and praxis,

more often than not the “revolutions” their works spawned have been theoretical and one-dimensional (obsessively focused on the critique of capitalism), as opposed to practical and multidimensional (simultaneously critiquing capitalism *and* racism *and* colonialism). Black radicals/critical race theorists, he observes, have frequently been more successful at linking radical (antiracist and anticapitalist) theory to liberation struggles and social movements because their “oppression has been more blatant and unmediated,” and because “their situation has necessitated a direct connection between the normative and practical emancipation.” The “situation” that Mills is referring to is simultaneously historical, social, political, and economic, not to mention deeply raced and gendered. So, though critical race theorists and critical class theorists both have macro-sociohistorical concerns, in the end it all comes down to, not necessarily the way they shift and bend the critical theoretical method for their particular purposes, but *what* they shift and bend the critical theoretical method to address *and* alter.<sup>3</sup> For most white Marxists, race and racism are nonentities, but for many black Marxists, capitalism is utterly incomprehensible without connecting it to the rise of race, racism, racial violence, white supremacy, and racial colonialism. Hence, black radicals’ constant creations of timelines and topographies of the political economy of race and racism in capitalist and colonialist contexts, and emphasis on revising and advancing alternatives to Eurocentric historiography and Marxist historical materialism in light of white supremacist and European imperial concepts and ruling race narratives that render race and racism historically invisible, obsolete, or nonexistent.

Where white Marxists/critical class theorists have a long-standing history of neglecting, not only the political economy of race and racism but the distinct radical thought-traditions, life-worlds, and life-struggles of continental and diasporan Africans in capitalist and colonialist contexts, primarily utilizing the black radical tradition, Africana critical theory endeavors to accent the overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting character of capitalism, colonialism, racism, and sexism, among other forms of domination, oppression, and exploitation. This means, then, that Africana critical theory transgresses and transcends the white Marxist tradition of critical theory in light of its epistemic openness and emphasis on continuously critically and dialectically deepening and developing the basic concepts and categories of its sociotheoretical framework and synthesizing disparate discourses into its own original *antiracist, antisexist, anticapitalist, anticolonialist, and sexual orientation-sensitive praxis-promoting critical theory of contemporary society*.

Above, Engels ultimately and ironically wrote “the [white] workers gaily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and the colonies,” which is to say that he acknowledged that white workers participate in and are part and parcel of Europe’s imperial expansion project, and that

they have been fooled into believing that they benefit from white supremacist colonialism just as much as the European bourgeoisie. To put it plainly: This is true, as well as untrue, and this is precisely where one of the true tricks of the European bourgeoisie may be revealed. White workers, indeed, do profit from white supremacist colonialism, although their fiendish financial gains are more or less miniscule compared to those of the bourgeoisie and, furthermore, what is often overlooked is that a large part of what white workers reap is not monetary or material but, if the truth be told, white supremacist *psychological support and supplies*; white supremacist *injustice justifications and jurisdiction*; white supremacist *racial resources and reserves*; and, white supremacist *cultural capital and claims to human divinity and human dignity*. In other words, in a white supremacist world most white workers ironically and automatically embrace the anti-black racist and bourgeois belief that black and other nonwhite workers are inferior and they themselves are superior: the diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black/nonwhite inferiority works its way into the fray once again. The embrace of and belief in the superiority of white workers extends well beyond the walls of the factories, docks, and corporations where they work and impacts and influences all the major institutions of white supremacist society: from the government to the church, from public education to private life (Goldberg, 1993, 1997, 2001; Goldberg and Solomos, 2002; C. I. Harris, 1995; L. Harris, 1999; C. W. Mills, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003a, 2003b; Solomos and Back, 2000; Solomos and Murji, 2005).

Part of Fanon's distinction and claim to innovation in the Marxist tradition lies in his critical realization that European and European American workers not only harbor identical positions concerning racial colonial policy as those of the European and European American bourgeoisies but, even more, that "the workers gaily share the feast of England's [read: Europe and white America's] monopoly of the world market and the colonies." Fanon decidedly deviates from traditional Marxism in that Marx's ideal agents of social change, the proletariat, are demonstrated to have been duped into believing that white supremacist colonialism is the cure for capitalism, not democratic socialism. Fanon could see that the ideology of white supremacy had lead white workers to believe that the real cause of their problems, economic and otherwise, was nonwhites or, as some whites have said, "the white man's burden," whether in Europe or in the racial colonies (see T. Dixon, 1903; Gatewood, 1975; M. Holden, 1973a, 1973b; W. D. Jordan, 1974; Kipling, 1899; Kurt, 1992; W. Russell, 2006; Ru. Smith, 1946). In this sense, Fanon argued, white workers were willing to rise in white supremacist bourgeois society at the agonizing expense of nonwhite workers, instead of joining with the wretched of the earth to decolonize and deracinate white supremacist colonial capitalism.



**THE EMBOURGEOISEMENT OF THE AFRICAN PROLETARIAT,  
THE RADICALIZATION OF THE AFRICAN PEASANTRY, AND  
THE REPUDIATION OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST  
THEORY OF THE VANGUARD PARTY**

Fanon also controversially claimed that the African proletariat, too, had been duped by white supremacist colonialism and was willing to make amends with its exploitation and alienation, so long as it could have some of the crumbs that fall off of the white supremacist colonial table. He identified and asserted that the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat shared interests in keeping the white supremacist capitalist-colonial system going if—and this is an extremely important *if*—the African bourgeoisie was willing to share some of the spoils of the newly inherited neocolonial caste system left in the wake of the death of European-directed white supremacist colonialism. He pulls no punches in exposing what he describes as the “pampered” and “privileged position” of the African proletariat:

But although this proletariat has read the party publications and understood its propaganda, it is much less ready to obey in the event of orders being given which set in motion the fierce struggle for national liberation. It cannot be too strongly stressed that in the colonial territories the proletariat is the nucleus of the colonized population which has been most pampered by the colonial regime. The embryonic proletariat of the towns is in a comparatively privileged position. In capitalist countries, the working class has nothing to lose; it is they who in the long run have everything to gain. In the colonial countries the working class has everything to lose; in reality it represents that fraction of the colonized nation which is necessary and irreplaceable if the colonial machine is to run smoothly: it includes tram conductors, taxi drivers, miners, dockers, interpreters, nurses, and so on. It is these elements which constitute the most faithful followers of the nationalist parties, and who because of the privileged place which they hold in the colonial system constitute also the “bourgeois” fraction of the colonized people. (Fanon, 1968, pp. 108–109)

Basically Fanon developed a *critical theory of the embourgeoisement of the African proletariat* which asserted that their involvement in and connections to the white supremacist colonial and neocolonial economic system retarded, and in most cases rendered virtually impossible, their development of revolutionary consciousness in the interest of “true decolonization.” Calling his readers’ attention to the intense inferiority complex and the burgeoning embrace of bourgeois views and values on the part of the African proletariat and, for that matter, most Africans who came into regular contact with white supremacist colonizers and their culture, Fanon pointed to the African peasantry and those who had the least direct and daily contact with white supremacist colonialism and its political economy. However,

it should be pointed out that it was not the rural radicalism of the African peasantry alone that constituted the singular revolutionary socialist force of change in Africa for Fanon, but a creative coalition and alliance of anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antiracist rural, urban and, even, suburban sociopolitical classes with a shared interest in Africa's development, as well as the distinct development of their respective nations, cities, towns, and rural regions. This means, then, that Fanon does not completely reject the active and important radical political participation of the African proletariat as much as he emphasizes its embourgeoisement when compared and contrasted with the lived-experiences, life-struggles, and, more importantly, the anti-imperialist and potential revolutionary consciousness (if provided with proper "political education") of the lumpenproletariat and peasantry of Africa.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Fanon acknowledged that some progressive African proletarian trade unions, which come "into being during the decisive phase of the fight for independence," have been "in fact the legal enlistment of conscious, dynamic nationalist elements" (p. 121). He, therefore, does not completely disavow the African proletariat as much as he places a greater emphasis on providing the peasantry with proper "political education" about racial colonialism and the baiting practices of both the white and black bourgeoisies. For Fanon, by starting from life-worlds and lived-experiences, often literally, outside of the racial colonial orbit, the lumpenproletariat and peasantry seemed to offer African revolutionists a way to rupture both the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat's tendency to give in to reformist, white supremacist, neocolonial constitutional politics, which ultimately always leads to a compromise with the very racial colonial system that the African masses, who mostly live in the rural areas, entrusted them to decisively break with once and for all.<sup>5</sup>

In the so-called postcolonial period the African bourgeoisie *and* the African proletariat take over where the white supremacist bourgeois colonials left off, and their primary preoccupation is *not* with transforming the means and modes of production to suit the pressing, concrete, and unique needs of Africa and Africans, but their real concern is with how much their specific class, whether bourgeoisie or proletarian, can rapaciously gain from the new African-sanctioned neocolonial system, which is always and ever an extension and expansion of the European imperial system in blackface or, rather, in minstrel mode and, usually, wearing a dashiki. It is for this reason that Fanon asserted that the African proletariat, as he did with the European proletariat, is "pampered" and in a "privileged position," which in most instances precludes it from playing a leading role in the revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization of Africa. While the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat hurriedly and greedily attempt to grab everything and anything they can get their grimy and grisly grips

on, the African peasantry, which is to say, the masses of African people, humbly continue to eke out an existence on the periphery of a so-called postcolonial society in which they and their life-worlds, lived-experiences, and life-struggles should be central and reverently recognized.

From Fanon's point of view, it was the peasantry who would be the primary agents of revolutionary decolonization in Africa. Of course, he argued that the peasantry would need to be *initially*—to a certain extent and without condescension—led by, and have coalitions and alliances with, radical/revolutionary urban and middle-class militants who would serve as “political educators” (p. 144). His argument here simultaneously offers a minor deviation from traditional Marxist-Leninism, as well as yet another indication of why his theory of revolution is regularly situated within the world of Marxian radicalism: because from Marx to Mao, Lenin to Lefebvre, and Gramsci to Guevara, Marxist-Leninists have long—albeit often ambiguously—argued that the peasantry would play an important role in the revolution and, because of its alleged inability to undertake autonomous revolutionary action, the peasantry would have to be initially led by or, at the least, wage revolution in concert with, middle-class and university-trained intellectual-activists as well as revolutionary proletarian intellectual-activists, folk Gramsci (2000) referred to as “organic intellectuals” (pp. 301–311).<sup>6</sup>

Fanon's theory of revolution is unique in that he dialectically demonstrated that Marxist analysis has both strengths and weaknesses or, rather, pluses and minuses when applied to racial colonial societies in general, and (neo)colonial African contexts in particular. Instead of mindlessly going along with Marx and many Marxists' assertion of the proletariat as the essential and ideal agents of socialist revolution, Fanon offered a unique political economic analysis and critical social theory which was more specific to the contradictions and conundrums of colonial and neocolonial Africa and the aspirations of not only Pan-African radicals and revolutionaries but the masses (as opposed to two specific classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat) of African people. In some instances he completely collapsed and created his own homespun critical concepts and categories, and in other instances he innovated and re-created long-standing Marxian concepts and categories to suit the needs of Africa and Africans. His discourse on the revolutionary potential of the African peasantry provides a prime example and lucidly illustrates why he considers both the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat “Westernized elements” in Africa long after the European colonialists leave the “postcolonial” government in African hands:

The Westernized elements experience feelings with regard to the bulk of the peasantry which are reminiscent of those found among the town workers of

industrialized countries. The history of middle-class and working-class revolutions has shown that the bulk of the peasants often constitute a brake on the revolution. Generally in industrialized countries the peasantry as a whole are the least aware, the worst organized, and at the same time the most anarchical element. They show a whole range of characteristics—individualism, lack of discipline, liking for money, and propensities toward waves of uncontrollable rage and deep discouragement which define a line of behavior that is objectively reactionary. (p. 111)

In the colonial and neocolonial African context, it was not the peasantry who seemed to Fanon to be suffering from “individualism” and politically “reactionary” but, he decidedly declared, both the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat. He went on to explain with words that deserve to be quoted in detail:

In the colonies, it is at the very core of the embryonic working class that you find individualist behavior. The landless peasants, who make up the *lumpenproletariat*, leave the country districts, where vital statistics are just so many insoluble problems, rush toward the towns, crowd into tin-shack settlements, and try to make their way into the ports and cities founded by colonial domination. The bulk of country people for their part continue to live within a rigid framework, and the extra mouths to feed have no other alternative than to emigrate toward the centers of population. The peasant who stays put defends his traditions stubbornly, and in a colonized society stands for the disciplined element whose interests lie in maintaining the social structure. It is true that this unchanging way of life, which hangs on like grim death to rigid social structure, may occasionally give birth to movements which are based on religious fanaticism or tribal war. But in their spontaneous movements the country people as a whole remain disciplined and altruistic. The individual stands aside in favor of the community. The country people are suspicious of the townsman. The latter dresses like a European; he speaks the European's language, works with him, sometimes even lives in the same district; so he is considered by the peasants as a turncoat who has betrayed everything that goes to make up the national heritage. The townspeople are “traitors and knaves” who seem to get on well with the occupying powers, and do their best to get on within the framework of the colonial system. This is why you often hear the country people say of town dwellers that they have no morals. Here, we are not dealing with the old antagonism between town and country; it is the antagonism which exists between the native who is excluded from the advantages of colonialism and his counterpart who manages to turn colonial exploitation to his account. (pp. 111–112)<sup>7</sup>

We witness here that Fanon's perspective on the peasantry's potential revolutionary consciousness is centered around their *political economic position*, or lack thereof, in white supremacist colonial and neocolonial societies. Along with the peasants' political economic position, there is also a

*political existential dimension* that shapes and shades Fanon's contentions, critical contentions which point to what he understands to be the peasants' authenticity and their unique pretensions to anticolonial radicalism. However, Fanon admits that the peasantry's authenticity, their often open hostility to every aspect of racial colonial culture, and their efforts to maintain their traditional culture does not automatically mean that they will gravitate toward radicalism, and it certainly does not mean they will automatically pledge themselves to democratic socialist revolution.

In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon deftly demonstrates that the peasants' emphasis on authenticity can be both its revolutionary blessing as well as its counterrevolutionary curse (pp. 129–140). In other words, peasant authenticity could just as well lead to reactionary, reformist, and conservative—albeit anticolonial—political action and social reorganization, just as much as it could anticolonial radicalism and sincere commitment to transethnic and democratic socialist revolution. We, therefore, witness once again Fanon's critical consciousness and astute identification of yet another paradoxical predicament which white supremacist colonialism presents in the African context: the simultaneous and contradictory coexistence of pretensions to both *anticolonial conservatism* and *anticolonial radicalism* on the part of the African peasantry. This means, then, that in Fanon's theory of revolution there is no singular, pure, or perfect group of agents of social change, but more a combination of radical political actors and actresses from several sectors of society who, for very varied reasons, are deeply disaffected with both white supremacy and colonialism, as well as Eurocentric conceptions of "democracy" and, it should be solemnly said, "socialism." It is, also, this combination of radical political actors and actresses who quickly grow tired of the reprehensible rhetoric spewing from both the African bourgeois and the African proletarian sectors of society concerning the new "postcolonial" nation and solemnly take as its primary preoccupation the revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization of their nation in particular, and Africa in general.

In a way, Fanon's contention that though a combination of radical political actors and actresses from several sectors of society will collectively bring "true decolonization" into being, but ultimately they will be lead by a small band of dedicated, radical "political educators," places his theory of revolution squarely in the land of Marxist-Leninism. In another, perhaps, more telling way, his criticisms of the vanguard party, and his questioning of whether that party of necessity must be a political party, especially a communist or socialist party in the Eurocentric sense, almost irrefutably illustrates yet another way in which Fanon deviated from the Marxist-Leninist tradition (Le Blanc, 1990; Lenin, 1960b, 1960c, 1976). Of particular note with regard to Fanon's critique of the utility of a revolutionary vanguard party dedicated to decolonization is his strong stress on the need to

modify Eurocentric and other non-African political theories and praxes to speak to the special needs of Africa and Africans involved in the process(es) and committed to program(s) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization. Fanon, in addition, offers a critique of racial colonial "intellectual elite[s]" who superimpose the theories and praxes they learned in European "mother countries" on the colonial and neocolonial African context, deftly demonstrating that the "parties" and "trade unions" they establish and lead are always and ever conceptually incarcerated in the pro-capitalist and pro-colonialist prison-houses of Europe or America and, therefore, always and ever in the interest of, first and foremost, foreign capitalists and then, of course, the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat. All the while, the African peasantry—which is to say, once again, the masses of African people—go on experiencing excruciatingly intense and ever-increasing suffering and social misery, even though they are told time and time again by both the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat that they are living in an independent "postcolonial" nation. In his own incisive words:

The native intellectuals, who have studied in their respective "mother countries" the working of political parties, carefully organize similar institutions in order to mobilize the masses and bring pressure to bear on the colonial administration. The birth of nationalist parties in the colonized countries is contemporary with the formation of an intellectual elite engaged in trade. The elite will attach a fundamental importance to organization, so much so that the fetish of organization will often take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society. The notion of the party is a notion imported from the mother country. This instrument of modern political warfare is thrown down just as it is, without the slightest modification, upon real life with all its infinite variations and lack of balance, where slavery, serfdom, barter, a skilled working class, and high finance exist side by side. The weakness of political parties does not only lie in the mechanical application of an organization which was created to carry on the struggle of the working class inside highly industrialized, capitalist society. If we limit ourselves to the *type* of organization, it is clear that innovations and adaptations ought to have been made. The great mistake, the inherent defect in the majority of political parties in underdeveloped regions has been, following traditional lines, to approach in the first place those elements which are the most politically conscious: the working class in the towns, the skilled workers, and the civil servants—that is to say, a tiny portion of the population, which hardly represents more than 1 per cent. (pp. 107–109, emphasis in original)

Although Fanon levels some of his harshest criticisms against the "parachut[ing]" of Eurocentric conceptions of political parties into Africa, it does not stand to reason that he repudiated the idea of a party free from—that is, decidedly distanced and disentangled from—Eurocentric

trappings (p. 113). In fact, it is important here to bear in mind that his above criticisms of the party system are particular to Eurocentric, pro-capitalist and pro-colonialist parties, and that these criticisms do not in any way preclude him, or anyone else for that matter, from putting forward a critical conception of a party that speaks to the special needs of Africa and Africans involved in the process(es) and committed to program(s) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization. Therefore, Fanon was not critical of the concept of political parties in and of themselves as much as he was deeply disturbed by the Eurocentric, pro-capitalist, and pro-colonialist ways in which "parties" and "trade unions" were being put to use and functioning throughout Africa, as well as other non-European, so-called underdeveloped continents and countries.

### **FANON'S THEORY OF THE RADICAL POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE AFRICAN PEASANTRY AND THEIR DECENTRALIZED PARTY DEDICATED TO REVOLUTIONARY DECOLONIZATION AND REVOLUTIONARY RE-AFRICANIZATION**

Many may be wondering with Fanon's harsh and heavy criticisms of the party system enumerated above how he could possibly salvage the party concept in the interests of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization. This is plausible when one considers his consistent criticisms of both European and African bourgeois notions of the party, as well as Eurocentric socialist and communist conceptions of the party. Fanon's conception of the party is distinct in that it points to its complete identification with the anti-imperialist aspirations of the African peasantry and their democratic involvement in every aspect of party life. In this sense, the Fanonian party is not and cannot in any way be separated from the life-worlds, lived-experiences, and life-struggles of the African masses, because through their radical political education the peasantry not only participates in, but also collectively and democratically leads the party. Fanon affirmed:

A country that really wishes to answer the questions that history puts to it, that wants to develop not only its towns but also the brains of its inhabitants, such a country must possess a trustworthy political party. The party is not a tool in the hands of the government. Quite on the contrary, the party is a tool in the hands of the people; it is they who decide on the policy that the government carries out. . . . In an underdeveloped country, the party ought be organized in such fashion that it is not simply content with having contacts with the masses. The party should be the direct expression of the masses. The party is not an administration responsible for transmitting government orders; it is the energetic spokesman and the incorruptible defender of the masses. In order to arrive at

this conception of the party, we must above all rid ourselves of the very Western, very bourgeois and therefore contemptuous attitude that the masses are incapable of governing themselves. (pp. 184–185, 187–188)

Fanon's conception of the party is openly critical of the patently paternalistic attitude and approach to the masses that most competing conceptions of the party seem to sanction; including Marxist-Leninist conceptions of the party, especially the "vanguard" party. Observe his complete identification with and unfaltering faith in ordinary Africans. This is simultaneously a swipe at the African colonial elites as well as the African "intellectual elites" and "urban militants," who at their very best analytical moments usually only look to "the working class in the towns, the skilled workers, and the civil servants," following Eurocentric Marxian and trade union traditions, as the ideal and essential agents of change in the colonial and neocolonial African context. Flying in the face of the "the masses are incapable of governing themselves" thesis—a thesis so long associated with both Eurocentric bourgeois *and*, ironically, if truth be told, Marxist-Leninist social theory—Fanon hinges his theory of revolution on the rural radicalism, political education and revolutionary potential of the African peasantry, not simply the often lame leadership and imported social theory of the African "intellectual elites" and the orthodox Marxian supposition of the radical political participation of the African proletariat. Here, once again, it needs to be made clear that the theory of the party that Fanon is developing in this instance is comprised of a combination of radical political actors and actresses from several sectors of society who, for very varied reasons, are deeply disaffected with both white supremacy and colonialism, as well as Eurocentric conceptions of "democracy" and, it should be solemnly said again, "socialism."

Continuing to challenge the "the masses are incapable of governing themselves" thesis, Fanon forcefully argues that "[t]he party should be decentralized in the extreme." Why, we ask? Of course, Fanon characteristically avers, to avoid the centralization of the party and the constant political corruption which seems almost automatically to plague colonial and neocolonial capital cities, but also to promote political participation and rural revitalization. He continues:

In an underdeveloped country, the leading members of the party ought to avoid the capital as if it had the plague. They ought, with some few exceptions, to live in the country districts. The centralization of all activity in the city ought to be avoided. No excuse of administrative discipline should be taken as legitimizing that excrescence of a capital which is already overpopulated and overdeveloped with regard to nine-tenths of the country. The party should be decentralized in the extreme. It is the only way to bring life to regions which are dead, those regions which are not yet awakened to life. (p. 185)<sup>8</sup>



Fanon further expatiates his conception of a decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization, asserting that each district, urban or rural, should have at least one political bureau member. The member should *not* be the leader, or hold any authority whatsoever in the district. In addition, each district should have party-provided "political educators" whose express task is the continued radical political education and critical consciousness-raising of the people. On this issue, Fanon is very clear: "For the people, the party is not an authority, but an organism through which they as the people exercise their authority and express their will" (p. 185).

From Fanon's perspective, decentralizing the party offers several advantages. First, it "stops the process whereby the towns become top-heavy and the incoherent rush toward the cities of the mass of country people" (p. 186). The diffusion and regional devolution of power points to Fanon's emphasis on local people's meaningful political participation in the political process and, ultimately, this intensifies their belief in and identification with the decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization. Another advantage of decentralization involves the creation and increase of stronger links between party leaders and the rank-and-file, which also speaks to the issue of accountability. If party leaders are not concentrated in the capital and if, indeed, they live among and work with the people, then, not only will they be accountable and accessible to the people, but they will know from firsthand experience many of the people's needs and decolonial desires.

Fanon is critical of the entire concept of a "capital" and insists that it is yet another horrid hangover from the white supremacist colonial period. He incorrigibly critiques the Eurocentric and bourgeois conception(s) of a "capital," which many "postcolonial" African nations have established in their respective countries without any adaptations whatsoever to the colonial and neocolonial African context and, most importantly, without any serious consideration of the decolonial desires of the masses of their people. Fanon declared: "The capital of underdeveloped countries is a commercial notion inherited from the colonial period. But we who are citizens of the underdeveloped countries, we ought to seek every occasion for contacts with the rural masses" (p. 187). If party leaders live and work in rural districts, they will have a more intimate understanding of the issues that are important to the rank and filers of the rural regions and, more importantly, they will also awaken the masses of their people from "the dream of every citizen" existing under the neocolonial system, which is "to get up to the capital, and have his share of the cake" (p. 186). It is in this way, by living among the people and working with them, that the party would consistently demonstrate that it is truly decentralized and in the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and much more than a mere "instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie." It is, also, in this way that a

*two-way flow of information—from the party to the people, and from the people to the party—would further foster the people’s identification with the party and provide the party with ongoing validity and legitimacy in the eyes (i.e., in the hearts and minds) of the people, as well as concerned comrades throughout Africa and, even more, around the world.*

The bourgeois conception of the party basically views it as a tool of domination and oppression which exacerbates and perpetuates bourgeois capitalist and colonialist accumulation. It is not a party in the interests of the people or preoccupied with empowering the people. It is not a party whose primary preoccupation is the continuation of the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization. It is not a party concerned with the people’s permanent radical political education and critical consciousness-raising. And finally, it is certainly not a party engrossed in the great and noble goal of the radical democratic diffusion of cultural capital, social wealth, and political power. Quite on the contrary, the bourgeois conception of the party is that it is a contingent of capitalists and colonialists—including their foot soldiers, the patently pathetic petit bourgeoisie—who unscrupulously control and guilefully guide society in such a way that it increasingly disempowers and exploits the lives, lands, and labor of the masses of people. Fanon fumed: “The party, a true instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, reinforces the machine, and ensures that the people are hemmed in and immobilized. The party helps the government to hold the people down” (p. 171).

What Fanon sincerely sought to do was to bury the bourgeois conception of the party and create a new conception of a decentralized antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist party. In effect, he endeavored to turn the party paradigm right side up and to put it on the right side of the people, as well as to demonstrate to the people their inexstinguishable and unalterable power to transform themselves and their nation. It is the active radical political participation of the people in the party, and the ways in which the party democratically addresses the tragedies and triumphs of the people’s life-worlds and life-struggles that redoubles the people’s humble faith in themselves and, therefore, in *their* party. The masses active radical political participation in the party differentiates the Fanonian party from the bourgeois party and, ultimately, it is the decentralization of the party “in the extreme” that stands out as one of the cornerstone distinguishing concepts in Fanon’s theory of the party. However, in order for decentralization to really and truly be put into practice, and for it to impact and influence every aspect of party and national life as Fanon envisioned, then, it must be coupled with the permanent radical political education and critical consciousness-raising of the people, who, literally, constitute and control the decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization.<sup>9</sup>

In overcoming the conventional division between "the party" and "the people," Fanon strongly stresses the necessity of party leaders speaking directly to the people in a noncondescending language that is accessible across class lines and levels of literacy. Again, he challenges the "the masses are incapable of governing themselves" thesis with words and wisdom that cut to the core of the colonial "intellectual elites'" Eurocentric and bourgeois conceptions of both "the party" and "the people":

An isolated individual may obstinately refuse to understand a problem, but the group or the village understands with disconcerting rapidity. It is true that if care is taken to use only language that is understood by graduates in law and economics, you can easily prove that the masses have to be managed from above. But if you speak the language of everyday, if you are not obsessed by the perverse desire to spread confusion and to rid yourself of the people, then you will realize that the masses are quick to seize every shade of meaning and to learn all the tricks of the trade. If recourse is had to technical language, this signifies that it has been decided to consider the masses as uninitiated. Such a language is hard put to it to hide the lecturer's wish to cheat the people and to leave them out of things. The business of obscuring language is a mask behind which stands out the much greater business of plunder. The people's property and the people's sovereignty are to be stripped from them at one and the same time. Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand. (pp. 188–189)

Fanon rejects the view that the rural peasantry, or the masses as a whole for that matter, cannot comprehend the "complex" science of politics and, consequently, are passive or, worst, apathetic. One point above all others is driven home by his discourse on the decentralization of the party, and that is the underlying assumption that the African peasantry or, rather, the African masses not only possess the ability but also the deep-seated decolonial desire to take part in the difficulties of development and decision-making. This, of course, is not to give the impression that decentralization in the interest of revolutionary decolonization will not present the party and the people with serious problems. At first issue is the simple fact that in the modern moment often decisions must be made without delay. Critical questions, therefore, should be put to Fanon's conception of the decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization: How will pressing problems, problems which require a rapid response, be solved? Is it realistic to refer each and every issue to the local branches of the party for their input, especially when we bear in mind that Fanon sternly stated that: "In an underdeveloped country, experience proves that the important thing is not that three hundred people form a plan and decide upon carrying it out, but that the whole people plan and decide even if it takes them twice or three times as long" (p. 193)? Further, will each and every district need

the approval of other districts before it can take action on district-specific issues? And, to take this line of critical questioning one step further, what about foreign policy and foreign trade? Is the people's input to be counted on here as well? What purpose would be served by sending arguably "complex" questions, well-beyond purview of the ordinary people, to the local branches of the party? Aren't some "matters of the state" better left to experts and statesmen (or stateswomen)? Fanon resoundingly responds to our critical questions. First,

We must create a national policy, in other words a policy for the masses. We ought never to lose contact with the people which has battled for its independence and for the concrete betterment of its existence. The native civil servants and technicians ought not to bury themselves in diagrams and statistics, but rather in the hearts of the people. They ought not to bristle up every time there is question of a move to be made to the "interior." We should no longer see the young women of the country threaten their husbands with divorce if they do not manage to avoid being appointed to a rural post. For these reasons, the political bureau of the party ought to treat these forgotten districts in a very privileged manner; and the life of the capital, an altogether artificial life which is stuck onto the real, national life like a foreign body, ought to take up the least space possible in the life of the nation, which is sacred and fundamental. (p. 187)

This passage is connected to the earlier excerpt, which began and ended with the following sentences: "An isolated individual may obstinately refuse to understand a problem, but the group or the village understands with disconcerting rapidity. . . . Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand." What is most important to observe here is Fanon's faith in those folks in the "forgotten districts" and his realistic acknowledgment that many of them may have serious reservations about participating in a decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization. When he uses the key phrase, some "may obstinately refuse to understand a problem," he is not in any way saying that they do not understand a specific issue, but more that they have stubbornly allowed their fears, suspicions, and inferiority complexes—after all, let's face it, only Europeans and European Americans really know how to run a "democratic" country, right?—to cause them to be socially and politically impotent and immobile.

The people do not want to go back to white supremacist colonialism, but at the same time they do not want to go "forward" to African bourgeoisie-sanctioned white supremacist neocolonialism. Therefore, part of the decentralized party's radical political education of the people must provide them with tools to distinguish between "true" and "false" decolonization (p. 59). The people themselves—on their own terms, in their own hearts

and minds, and through their own eyes—have to be able to detect a distinct difference between the “revolutionary path” that the decentralized party wishes to lead the country onto and the neocolonial road-to-nowhere that the African bourgeoisie, always and ever under the auspices of the European and European American bourgeoisies, intends to bribe and browbeat the nation onto (Nkrumah, 1973a). Many of the individuals who “may obstinately refuse to understand a problem,” especially if the problem is presented from the bourgeois or the “dictatorship of the proletariat” point of view, actually understand the problem, and let go of their fears and, eventually, let their guards down when they witness their neighbors and others from their region taking part in decision-making and actively participating in their country’s development.

It is in this context, among familiar faces and explained in a language that is easily understood, that the individuals who “may obstinately refuse to understand a problem” begin to understand problems with “disconcerting rapidity.” The masses’ quick comprehension of the complexities of political science is not “disconcerting” to the decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization, but to the African bourgeoisie and their bureaucrats. In fact, the masses’ expeditious understanding of the problems facing the nation is proof-positive of the success of the decentralized party’s radical political education program(s) and their sincere commitment to the diffusion of cultural capital, social wealth, and political power.

An alternate interpretation of the “disconcerting rapidity” in which the masses understand problems could also point to the ways that a collective understanding of a problem trumps and, therefore, transcends an individual’s misunderstanding of a problem in many African milieux. In a sense, then, collective understanding leads to an expression of the collective will, *the will of the people*. However, it should be emphasized that Fanon did write that an individual “may obstinately refuse to understand a problem,” which also leads us to believe that her or his voice would be heard and her or his vote would be taken into serious consideration by the group. Ultimately, though, this phrase has voluntaristic connotations which renders the alternate interpretation, at best, problematic, and, at worst, untenable.

If, indeed, an individual or certain individuals “obstinately refuse to understand a problem,” then, it would appear that Fanon probably wanted to give the impression that fear, issues of mistrust, and, perhaps, the racial colonial inferiority complex were continuing to plague the individual or individuals in question, and it is these problems that influence their recalcitrant refusal to “understand a problem.” Here we have highly obvious intentional misunderstanding and purposeful nonparticipation in problem-solving and decision-making, which gives credence to the earlier assertion that this is more than likely what causes the collective to trump and, therefore, transcend the dissenting voice and vote of an individual or

minority of individuals. Fanon thundered: "Nobody, neither leader nor rank-and-filer, can hold back the truth" (p. 199). This means, then, that the alternate interpretation does not stand to reason, and that the previous analysis of Fanon's intentions here still stands.

Here we have stumbled upon another set of the critical questions put to Fanon's conception of the decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization, specifically the questions: Is it realistic to refer each and every issue to the local branches of the party for their input? And, will each and every district need the approval of other districts before it can take action on district-specific issues? The truth is that Fanon offers only partial answers to these, among other, lingering questions. He seems to raise questions without ever even attempting to answer them. This could be part of a conscious decision on his part to allow the people to practice collective leadership and come to collective decisions about their lives, lands and labor, or it could be on account of the fact that he wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* as he lay dying of leukemia. Whatever the case may have been, what seems clear is that Fanon intended his work to point to an alternate path that the African bourgeoisie and their bureaucrats, as well as the African proletariat and their trade unions would be happy to hide from the people if they can continue to share the spoils of the war against the African masses that white supremacist colonialism has been waging for half a millennium. Fanon's—again, only partial—answers to the questions above are as follows:

In an underdeveloped country, experience proves that the important thing is not that three hundred people form a plan and decide upon carrying it out, but that the whole people plan and decide even if it takes them twice or three times as long. The fact is that the time taken up by explaining, the time "lost" in treating the worker as a human being, will be caught up in the execution of the plan. People must know where they are going, and why. The politicians should not ignore the fact that the future remains imperfect, elementary, and cloudy. We African politicians must have very clear ideas on the situation of our people. But this clarity of ideas must be profoundly dialectical. The awakening of the whole people will not come about all at once; the people's work in the building of the nation will not immediately take on its full dimensions: first because the means of communication and transmission are only beginning to be developed; secondly because the yardstick of time must no longer be that of the moment or up till the next harvest, but must become that of the rest of the world, and lastly because the spirit of discouragement which has been deeply rooted in people's minds by colonial domination is still very near the surface. (pp. 193–194)

Fanon demonstrates his awareness of the people's continuing inferiority complex(es) with the phrase "the spirit of discouragement which has been deeply rooted in people's minds by colonial domination is still very

near the surface." The express purpose of the decentralized party's radical political education program(s) is not only to provide them with political education but also to combat their continuing racial colonial inferiority complex(es). It is for this reason that the issue of re-Africanization must also be critically raised. However, we must be clear here by what is meant by the locution "revolutionary re-Africanization." Just as there can be "true" and "false" decolonization, there can also be "true" and "false" re-Africanization.

### FANON'S AMBIGUITY ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF RE-AFRICANIZATION: TOWARD A CRITICAL THEORY OF THE DIALECTICAL PROCESS(ES) OF REVOLUTIONARY DECOLONIZATION AND REVOLUTIONARY RE-AFRICANIZATION

As mentioned above, Fanon is very vague on several key issues concerning the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization, the decentralized party dedicated to revolutionary decolonization, and exactly what his conception of re-Africanization entails. To really get to the meat of the matter, then, let us briefly turn to the work of the two leading theorists of Negritude, Aime Cesaire and Leopold Senghor, which will enable us to lucidly look at the distinct differences between "true" and "false" re-Africanization, which Fanon hints at but never really develops in his discourse. This exploration of "true" and "false" re-Africanization in Negritude will ultimately give way to a juxtaposition of Amilcar Cabral's conception of "return to the source" with Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization, which, as aforementioned, only seems to engage re-Africanization in the abstract, where Cabral's work seems to simultaneously concretize and revolutionize re-Africanization. This section, therefore, seeks to strengthen an epistemically weak area within Fanon's body of work by bringing it into critical dialogue with several intellectual-activists whose thought and texts offer critical questions and crucial answers concerning the extremely important issue of re-Africanization. Moreover, this section also seeks to offer those seriously and sincerely interested in the ongoing synthesis of Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory an opportunity to accent continuity and discontinuity within the Africana tradition of critical theory *and* Africana critical theory of contemporary society.

Fanon's work, as with the corpora of most truly *critical* theorists, raises many more questions than it actually answers, which is to say, it points to more pressing problems than it cogently and concretely provides solutions to. For example, it was Fanon who critically questioned Cesaire and Senghor's important, albeit inchoate, conceptions of re-Africanization, which

revolved around their respective theories of "return."<sup>10</sup> However, Fanon's texts themselves actually offer us very little by way of authentic answers, as opposed to radical rhetoric, aimed at the very critical questions concerning re-Africanization that he raised. Always and ever he seemed to be more interested in distinguishing between "true" and "false" decolonization. In the long run this proves to be a considerable conundrum, which, if left in the lurch, could be found to be fatal for Fanon's contributions to Africana critical theory. Allow me to elaborate.

If, indeed, "the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself," then it would seem that re-Africanization is initiated at the very same moment that the party and the people dedicate themselves to revolutionary decolonization, which is to say that re-Africanization, *real* and, therefore, *revolutionary* re-Africanization is not something that takes place *after* revolutionary decolonization, but, as a matter of fact, it happens *during* the very process(es) of, and *through* the radical political education and radical political participation of the party and the people in revolutionary decolonization (pp. 36–37). Fanon's ironic ambiguity in answering his own critical questions concerning re-Africanization represents a serious critical theoretical weakness within his work, one that renders the leitmotif of his oeuvre a little lopsided and makes it lean more toward revolutionary decolonization but very vague when and where we come to re-Africanization, which, in other words, translates into the key critical questions regarding the distinct humanity, identity, and personality of the Africans who have decidedly dedicated themselves to the process(es) and program(s) of revolutionary decolonization that Fanon is so famous, if not infamous, for presenting and promoting.

However, instead of putting forward a long litany of the critical theoretical weaknesses of Fanon's work, African critical theory accents conceptual continuity and discontinuity with an eye toward the ways in which Fanon's critical theoretical weaknesses were addressed by future revolutionary Fanonists, particularly Amílcar Cabral, who was, perhaps, the first to detect Fanon's inattention to, and the inadequacy of his theory of re-Africanization and dauntlessly deepened and developed it, boldly built on and went beyond it. That being said, it must be admitted that it was Amílcar Cabral (1973)—undoubtedly the greatest revolutionary Fanonist of the twentieth century—who answered the critical questions Fanon put to Césaire and Senghor's respective theories of "return" with his own intellectual history-making theory of "return to the source." Humbly hoping to continue this important trend within the Africana tradition of critical theory, which was initiated and expatiated by Césaire, Fanon, and Cabral, below I add to this discourse by offering a critical theory of the *dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization* in, perhaps, one of the first twenty-first-century



efforts to revisit, revise, and reintroduce an often overlooked dimension of the discourse on revolutionary decolonization, Fanonian or otherwise (see also Rabaka, 2009).

In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (1967) asserted: "Without a Negro past, without a Negro future it is impossible for me to live my Negrohood" (p. 138). The future, for Fanon, is predicated on how one understands her or his past, and that is why he contends that if "the Negro" is robbed of critical knowledge of her or his past, then, a "Negro future" becomes questionable, and with it the very idea of "the Negro" and her or his "Negrohood" or Negritude. The Ghanaian political theorist, Ato Sekyi-Otu (1996), contends that in Fanonian philosophy the "ideal of the postcolonial future was in its essential details called forth by a particular memory of the colonial past" (p. 205). For Fanon, then, the very process of decolonization is "called forth" by the revolutionary reclamation and remembrance of the violence of the "colonial past."

However, there was a "past" long before colonialism, observed Césaire (1972), a precolonial past of "beautiful and important black civilizations," and it is this part of the "past" that is "worthy of respect" and which should be radically reclaimed and rehabilitated because it "contains certain elements of great value" with regard to the present (p. 76). Sekyi-Otu (1996) suggests that for Fanon "political education" meant nothing other than "*the practice of teaching the people a remembrance of their sovereignty*" (p. 211, all emphasis in original). When precisely were "the people" sovereign from a Césairean point of view? Yes! You've guessed it: in precolonial Africa, before the European imperialist interruption of and intervention into African life-worlds and language-worlds. But, is this really so? Were "the people" really and truly sovereign then? One thing is for certain, however: "the people" will never know unless they themselves—again, on their own terms, in their own hearts and minds, and with their own eyes—critically encounter and dialectically engage their inherited historicity, cultural capital, social wealth, and political power that was bequeathed to them by their ancestors.

The past is inextricable from the present and the future in Césairean Negritude. It is, or would be, impossible to "decolonize our minds, our inner life, at the same time that we decolonize society" if we did not (or "legally" could not) possess critical knowledge of our "Negro past." In order to procure appropriate and applicable knowledge of our historicity and Africanity—that is, the lived-experiences and lived-endurances of our ancestors and their, if truth be told, multicultural, transethnic, and transgenerational identities—it is necessary, Césaire maintained, for us to *return* to (or, as I would prefer, *rediscover*) the lives and legacies, the histories and cultures of our ancestors to learn the lessons of Africa's tragedies and triumphs.

In *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, the Kenyan philosopher Dismas Masolo (1994) importantly mused:

Closely related to the concept of Negritude, the idea of "return" gives the dignity, the personhood or humanity, of black people its historicity; it turns it into consciousness or awareness, into a state (of mind) which is subject to manipulations of history, of power relations. It is this idea of "return" which opens the way to the definition of Negritude as a historical commitment, as a movement. In the poem [*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*], then, the word "return" has two meanings, one real, depicting Césaire's historical repatriation to a geographical or perceptual space, Martinique; the other metaphorical, depicting a "return" to or a regaining of a conceptual space in which culture is both field and process—first of alienation and domination, but now, most importantly, of rebellion and self-refinding [*sic*]. Today, this "return" is a deconstructivist term which symbolizes many aspects of the struggle of the peoples of African origin to control their own identity. . . . For many black people, slavery and [the] slave trade had provided the context for the need for a social and racial solidarity among themselves. Solidarity was their strength and a weapon with which to counter Westernism's arrogant and aggressive Eurocentric culture. Césaire's "return to the native land" was therefore a symbolic call to all black peoples to rally together around the idea of common origin and in a struggle to defend that unifying commonality. To Césaire, Negritude meant exactly this—a uniting idea of common origin for all black peoples. It became their rallying point, their identity tag, and part of the language of resistance to the stereotype of the African "savage." (pp. 1–2)<sup>11</sup>

In grappling with Césaire's Negritudian notion of "return," it is important to understand that he, in no way, advocated a "return" to a glorious, antiquated African past. To read Césaire in this way would be to severely misread him. What Césaire advocated was an earnest engagement and acknowledgment of black humanity and historicity, and the Africanity that accompanies them. African identity—that is, our "Africanity"—does not exist outside of the discourse and horizon of history, and African history in particular (Serequeberhan, 1991, 1998). That is to say that we must constantly consider the fact that European imperialism—whether it expresses itself as racial, gender, or cultural oppression, or economic exploitation—has been, and remains a perpetual part of Africans' (as well as other non-European/nonwhite peoples') lived-experiences and lived-endurances since, at the very latest, the fifteenth century (Blaut, 1993; Eze, 1997b, 1997c; J. E. Harris, 1993; Pieterse, 1992; Rodney, 1972).

The "return," for Césaire, was not so much to an African past as it was to a set of African values, an African axiology, if you will, and this is the main meaning of "true" re-Africanization (Arnold, 1981; Hale, 1974; Jahn, 1958; Maldonado-Torres, 2006; Scharfman, 1987). Moreover, what Césaire (1972), very similar to W. E. B. Du Bois, appreciated most about

"the African past" was its "communal societies," its "societies that were . . . *anti-capitalist*," its "democratic societies," its "cooperative societies, [and] fraternal societies" (p. 23, emphasis in original; see also Du Bois 1965, 1970; Rabaka 2007b, 2008a). In comparing the African societies of the precolonial past with the neocolonial, as opposed to "postcolonial," African societies of his present, then 1955, Césaire stated that "despite their faults" the societies of Africa's precolonial past contained and could convey "values that could still make an important contribution to the world" (pp. 23, 76). Here, then, we witness the beginnings of "true" re-Africanization, which as we have seen is dialectical, possessing the ability to both critique and appreciate African history and culture and it is primarily preoccupied with the reclamation of African humanity and distinct identity. "True" re-Africanization "returns to the sources," à la Amílcar Cabral (1973), of African cultures and civilizations that are understood to make seminal contributions to revolutionary decolonization and the creation of authentically "postcolonial" African nations.

Similar to Césairean Negritude, Senghorian Negritude advocated a critical return to the precolonial African past but, unlike Césaire, Senghor's work consistently exhibited an intense preoccupation with and openness to contemporary European racial colonialist, particularly French, philosophy and culture. Where Césairean Negritude can best be characterized by its emphasis on African self-determination, African history, African culture, and the struggle(s) of the continental and diasporan African masses, Senghorian Negritude is best captured with the words assimilation, synthesis, symbiosis, pseudo-African socialism, and intellectual elitism. However, it is important to point out that, similar to Césaire, Senghor's thought is highly complex and often draws from and contributes to both African and European radical political thought-traditions. Senghor sought to utilize and synthesize what he took to be the best of African and European culture and create, following the French philosophical anthropologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a "Civilization of the Universal."<sup>12</sup>

As with Césairean Negritude, Senghorian Negritude pivots on an axiological foundation that does not seek to "return to the Negritude of the past, the Negritude of the sources," but to affirm contemporary neocolonial "Africanity" (Senghor, 1971, p. 51).<sup>13</sup> The sources of Senghor's Negritude, however subtly on first sight, are different from Césaire's, and different enough to constitute two distinct versions of Negritude, which may very well share a common language, a common interest in the reclamation and re-creation of African culture, and a common social(ist) vision, but which nevertheless developed and employed divergent strategies and tactics in pursuit of differing goals. In his classic *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, the Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji (1996) characterized Senghor's Negritude as a kind of "culturalism," which overemphasizes "the cultural aspect of

foreign domination" while downplaying and diminishing the significance of politics and economics—that is, the political economy of colonialism, capitalism, and racism, and how each oppressive and exploitative system incessantly intersects and interlocks in African life-worlds and lived-experiences (p. 160). Speaking directly about the distinct differences between Césairean and Senghorian Negritude, Hountondji asserted,

whereas for Césaire the exaltation of black cultures functions merely as a supporting argument in favor of political liberation, in Senghor it works as an alibi for evading the political problem of national liberation. Hypertrophy of cultural nationalism generally serves to compensate for the hypertrophy of political nationalism. This is probably why Césaire spoke so soberly about culture and never mentioned it without explicitly subordinating it to the more fundamental problems of political liberation. This also explains why, in works like *Liberté I*, Senghor, as a good Catholic and disciple of Teilhard de Chardin, emphasizes rather artificial cultural problems, elaborating lengthy definitions of the unique black mode of being and of being-in-the-world, and systematically evades the problem of the struggle against imperialism. (pp. 159–160)

In side-stepping "the political" by collapsing it into "the cultural," Senghorian Negritude connects with and in some senses becomes a comprador for racial colonial policy, racial colonial anthropology, and racial colonial ethnology. It, perhaps, unwittingly distorts the primacy of political and economic problems in the racial colonial world and serves as a racial colonial decoy, redirecting Africans' attention away from the political economy of their neocolonial conditions, to endless comparisons with European, and particularly French culture. What is worst is that these comparisons and cultural problems are themselves grossly simplified—à la Placide Tempels's *Bantu Philosophy*, Alexis Kagame's *Philosophie Bantou-Rwandaise de L'Etre*, Marcel Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemmeli*, and John Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy*—so as to reduce African culture to folklore, mysticism, and, almost exclusively, black popular culture, or "Afro-Pop," if you will—the most manifest exterior and gaudy aspects of contemporary continental and diasporan African cultures. The interiority of culture, its inner-life and internal contradictions, the dialectics and dynamism of culture and, more importantly, critical questions concerning the ways in which colonialism and racism impact culture are all abandoned, along with cultural history, cultural development, and, of course, cultural revolution. Senghorian Negritude, thus, solidifies African culture, painting a sad and synchronic picture, a dull and purposely "primitive" picture of African culture that is then contrasted with European culture, which, if truth be told, is also rendered one-dimensionally and schematized for the purposes of pseudoscientific, philosophically phony, and politically pointless comparisons. For instance,

let us briefly engage Senghor's characterization of "the African" with his articulation of "the European." Here "false" re-Africanization shamelessly shows its hideous face.

"The African" has an intense ontological affinity with nature that is apparently absent from European humanity. According to Senghor, "the Negro is the man of Nature." He further explained: "By tradition he ['the African'] lives off the soil and with the soil, in and by the Cosmos." He is "sensual, a being with open senses, with no intermediary between subject and object, himself at once subject and object." Because, for the African, this special kinship with and immediacy to nature is "first of all, sounds, scents, rhythms, forms and colors; I would say that he is touch, before being eye like the white European. He feels more than he sees; he feels himself" (Senghor, 1956, p. 52). For Senghor, this is the black's being-in-the-world—an acquiescing, ultra-accommodating immediacy, in tune and in rhythm with nature and the cosmos. It is this servility, this docility to nature that is supersignificant for Senghor, and he privileges it above all else in his characterization and articulation of the essence of "the African," the authentic ontology of the African or, as Sartre has said, "black-being-in-the-world." Senghor suggests that these formerly negative images and assertions about the primitivity of "black nature" are now somehow, as if with the waving of a magic wand, inverted, positive pejoratives pointing to idealized Africans' pristine primitivisms. This, in a nutshell, then, is Senghor's much-touted and often-mangled concept of Africanity, which is, perhaps, one of the more popular forms of "false" re-Africanization, because it is not re-Africanization at all but more an intense—albeit arcane—Europeanization and, therefore, recolonization of Africa and Africans.

From the Senghorian point of view, whether looking through the lens of Negritude or Africanity, there is fundamentally a qualitative ontological difference between European and African rationality and epistemology. "The Negro," declared Senghor in his defense, is "not devoid of reason, as I am supposed to have said. But his reason is not discursive: it is synthetic. It is not antagonistic: it is sympathetic. It is another form of knowledge." Furthermore, "Negro reason does not impoverish things, it does not mould them into rigid patterns by eliminating the roots and the sap: it flows in the arteries of things, it wedes all their contours to dwell in the living heart of the real." As if sensing the abstraction and absurdity of the preceding remarks, Senghor sought to clarify, stating: "White reason is analytic through utilization: Negro reason is intuitive through participation" (p. 52). Continuing to contrast African and European rationality, Senghor puts forward full-fledged definitions and descriptions of black and white reason, asserting that European reason is undoubtedly discursive and utilitarian and seeks

to capture, control, and convert: The "European is empiric," where "the African is mystic" (p. 59). The European, he went on to explain,

takes pleasure in recognizing the world through the reproduction of the object . . . the African from knowing it vitally through image and rhythm. With the European the chords of the senses lead to the heart and the head, with the African Negro to the heart and the belly. (p. 58)

Ironically, Senghor absurdly asserted, the African

does not realize that he thinks: he feels that he feels, he feels his existence, he feels himself; and because he feels the Other, he is drawn towards the other, into the rhythm of the Other, to be reborn in knowledge of the world. Thus the act of knowledge is an "agreement of conciliation" with the world, the simultaneous consciousness and creation of the world in its indivisible unity. (p. 64)

Here it is important to emphasize that, for Senghor, the above (racial colonial) definitions and descriptions of "the African" are not simply historical and, ipso facto, contingent characteristics pertaining to a particular history and culture at a particular point in time. Quite the contrary, similar to the white supremacists and Eurocentrists who put forward their imperialist interpretation of history as though it were the definitive and divine, indeed, the universal and undisputed "truth" of history, Senghor in a similar—though highly reactionary—fashion, which illustrates his intense internalization of Eurocentric and racial colonial conceptions of Africa and Africans, put forward the above definitions and descriptions concerning the distinct differences between African and European rationality and epistemology. It is imperative here to emphasize that Senghor does not understand himself to be casually articulating an interpretation, or a culture- or region-specific aspect of the African approach to knowledge; instead, he conceives of himself as a conduit through which the definitive "truth" about Africa and Africans, as a whole, is finally being revealed. What excites Senghor even more is that some higher power (perhaps, a white or French God) has honored and ordained him, brought him to a higher consciousness, and bestowed the burden of the revelation on him, which he jubilantly, and eloquently, I might add, accepts and articulates.

Sounding more like a prophet than a poet, Senghor said: "Nature has arranged things well in willing that each people, each race, each continent, should cultivate with special affection certain of the virtues of man; that is precisely where originality lies" (p. 64). But, this assertion begs the question: from what metaphysical or supernatural vantage point does Senghor sight and derive the "truth" that he articulates? In other words, what are the sources of his Africinity? The former is a question that has remained unanswered for more than half a century, and one that I (or, rather, Afri-

cana critical theory) will audaciously venture to say cannot be answered because Senghor's concept of Africanity, similar to his notion of Negritude, is conceptually incarcerated within the prison house of the Otherness of the Other as projected and presented by Europe's own metaphysical and "supernatural," "divine," and delusional, indeed, sadomasochistic self-(mis)conception. It is from within the confines of his cell inside the prison house of this centuries-spanning Eurocentric presentation and projection that Senghor conceived Africanity, his seemingly ever-in-vogue version of false re-Africanization. Senghorian Africanity, then, as Sartre sadly said of Negritude, was born only to die, because it cannot and does not exist outside of the Manichaean world and the imperialist machinations of Europe and European America.

From Senghor's epistemically suspect point of view, Africa is to enrich human culture and civilization through its intuitive reason, and Europe through the development of its discursive reason, and, ultimately, humanity will achieve Teilhard de Chardin's "Civilization of the Universal." Here, then, lies the "originality" that Senghor mentioned above, and also here, in plain view, is his conception of the "true" or authentic—ontologically speaking—complementarity of African and European rationality and epistemology. Africanity's axiology, therefore, was purposely produced, from within the prison house of a white supremacist and European imperial world, as a politically impotent, insult-embracing, racism-accepting, and colonialism-condoning search for African (sub)humanity, identity, and personality. So, is it any wonder that Africanity's values often mirror the very values that European colonizers and white enslavers projected onto Africa and Africans: intuitive reason, emotional, sensational, sensuousness, instinctual, feeling, rhythm, creative, imaginative, natural, agricultural, primitive, athletic, animalistic, hypersexual, spiritual, exotic, and erotic, and so on.

Without critically engaging the negative portraits and mischaracterizations of Africans put forward by the plethora of Eurocentric missionaries, philosophers, anthropologists, and ethnologists to which his work constantly refers, Senghor falls prey to the "culturalism" that Hountondji charged him with above. The Eurocentric mischaracterizations of Africa and Africans that Senghor develops his ideas out of constantly destabilizes the discursive foundation of his work and gives it its characteristic, if not infamous, contradictory character, its *discursive doublespeak*, if you will. His Africanity and Negritude naturalizes negative views of, and projections of primitivity onto, Africans and turns these "views" into timeless "truths."

Drawing from the pseudo-scientific and amorphous philosophical anthropology of Teilhard de Chardin, the racist and morally reprehensible ethnography of Count de Gobineau, the flimsy and flippant existential-phenomenological remarks on race and racism of Jean-Paul Sartre, and the

inchoate racial colonial ontological conjectures of Father Placide Tempels, among others, Senghor is overjoyed to invent an “authentic” African essence, which is always and ever nothing other than a roguish regurgitation of white supremacist colonial antiblack racism by another name: “Negritude” or “Africanity.” Critical readers are quick to query: how does Senghor “invent” an “authentic” African essence? Quite simply, he inverts Eurocentric negative descriptions and explanations of Africa and Africans, reinscribes them, and then re-presents them as Afrocentric positive evidence of an ontological difference in and for black-being-in-the-world. Senghor cannot comprehend that these descriptions are invariably situated within the contours of the Eurocentric prison house, which constantly conceptually incarcerates and (re)colonizes non-European cultures and civilizations, because European culture and civilization is always and ever the model and measure of “true” human culture and civilization. By unwittingly utilizing Europe as the model and measure of humanity, Senghor (re)inferiorizes and racially (re)colonizes Africa and Africans, making them Europe’s ideal Others, and leaving Europe exactly where the Eurocentric missionaries, philosophers, anthropologists, and ethnologists he continually quotes would like it to be left, *at the center* of all human history, culture, and “civilization.”

Here we have, in a nutshell, the negative version of re-Africanization, false re-Africanization, which seeks to put forward an image of “the African” that is acceptable to the European and European American bourgeoisies, the African bourgeoisie, the African colonial “intellectual elites,” and, believe it or not, many parts of the African proletariat, who, as Fanon said above, are hungry for their “share of the [neocolonial] cake.” Taking his cue from Césaire and Fanon, the Cape Verdean and Guinea-Bissau revolutionary Amílcar Cabral’s work has long provided one of the best counters to false re-Africanization and, even more than Césaire and Fanon, one of the most pivotal and perceptive discussions of the dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization. For Cabral, Africa, which is to say Africa’s histories, cultures, and peoples, is much more complex, its cultures more wide-ranging and distinctively diverse than previously noted by racial colonial anthropologists, ethnologists, missionaries, and others, including European-educated (or, rather, miseducated) Africans and their all-encompassing theories of Africa’s ancient and glorious past. This, of course, is not in any way to imply that Africa did not have an ancient and glorious past, but only to emphasize that not everything in Africa’s past was paradisiacal and that contemporary African critical theorists should employ Cabral’s unique African-centered dialectical and historical materialism when approaching Africa’s histories, cultures, and struggles. Additionally, Cabral argued—in some senses very similar to Fanon (1965, 1968, 1969)—that it must always be borne in mind that



the national liberation struggle, or any struggle against imperialism, raises critical consciousness, transforms and brings into being new traditions, and introduces new cultural elements, if not completely new African cultures and values.

One of the major dialectical dimensions of Cabral's concept of "return to the source," then, hinges on his contention that one of the strengths of a revolutionary nationalist movement, such as that of his party, Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), is that it preserves precolonial traditions and values but, at the same time, these traditions and values are drastically transformed through what I am currently calling *the dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization*; in other words, by the protracted struggle against the superimposition of foreign imperialist cultures and values and the reconstitution and synthesis of progressive precolonial and recently created revolutionary African traditions and values. Therefore, according to Cabral (1979): "The armed struggle for liberation, launched in response to aggression by the colonialist oppressor, turns out to be a painful but effective instrument for developing the cultural level both for the leadership strata of the liberation movement and for the various social categories who take part in the struggle" (pp. 151–152). Anticipating that many may misunderstand him, as they historically have and currently continue to misunderstand and misinterpret Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization and views on revolutionary self-defensive violence, Cabral further explained his conception of the national liberation struggle as a "painful but effective instrument":

As we know, the armed liberation struggle demands the mobilization and organization of a significant majority of the population, the political and moral unity of the various social categories, the efficient use of modern weapons and other means of warfare, the gradual elimination of the remnants of tribal mentality, and the rejection of social and religious rules and taboos contrary to the development of the struggle (gerontocracy, nepotism, social inferiority of women, rites and practices which are incompatible with the rational and national character of the struggle, etc.). The struggle brings about many other profound changes in the life of the populations. The armed liberation struggle implies, therefore, a veritable forced march along the road to cultural progress. (p.152)

Cabral's concept of "return to the source," therefore, is not only, as shall soon be shown, a "return to the upwards paths of [Africans'] own culture[s]," but also "a veritable forced march along the road to cultural progress." This "return," similar to that of Césaire, is a critical "return" that "is not and cannot in itself be an *act of struggle* against domination (colonialist and racist) and it no longer necessarily means a return to traditions" (Cabral, 1973,

p. 63, emphasis in original). Rather, the “return to the source” that Cabral has in mind is a conscious anticolonial and revolutionary step, however inchoate and anxiety-filled, and it is, he asserted, “the only possible reply to the demand of concrete need, historically determined, and enforced by the inescapable contradiction between the colonized society and the colonial power, the mass of the people exploited and the foreign exploitive class, a contradiction in the light of which each social stratum or indigenous class must define its position” (p. 63). In defining their position(s) in relation to, or, better yet, *against* the racial colonial and imperial powers, each member of the racially colonized society—individually and collectively—*chooses*, must as, literally, a matter of life or death, will themselves into becoming revolutionary praxis-oriented participants, active anticolonial agents in the dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization, the protracted process(es) of rescuing, reclaiming, and reconstructing her or his own humanity, history, and heritage.<sup>14</sup> In Cabral’s candid words:

When the “return to the source” goes beyond the individual and is expressed through “groups” or “movements,” the contradiction is transformed into struggle (secret or overt), and is a prelude to the pre-independence movement or of the struggle for liberation from foreign yoke. So, the “return to the source” is of no historical importance unless it brings not only real involvement in the struggle for independence, but also complete and absolute identification with the hopes of the mass of the people, who contest not only the foreign culture but also the foreign domination as a whole. Otherwise, the “return to the source” is nothing more than an attempt to find short-term benefits—knowingly or unknowingly a kind of political opportunism. (p. 63)

The “return to the source” may be said to translate into contemporary radical politics and critical social theory as the much touted “cultural revolution” that many have often argued proceeds and must continue throughout the national liberation struggle (see Gramsci, 2000; Lenin, 1975; Marcuse, 1964, 1968, 1972a; Nelson and Grossberg, 1988; Nkrumah, 1973a; Nyerere, 1966). Culture, when approached from a dialectical perspective, can be reactionary or revolutionary, traditional or transformative, decadent or dynamic, and the “return,” in light of this fact, must at the least be *critical* if it is to transcend and transgress futile attempts, as Serequeberhan (1994) sternly stated, “to dig out a purely African past and return to a dead tradition” (p. 107). The “return,” therefore, is only partially pointed at historical recovery, sociopolitical transformation, and revolutionary reorganization. There is another, often-overlooked aspect of Cabral’s concept of “return to the source” that simultaneously and dialectically strongly stresses *revolutionary cultural restoration* and *revolutionary cultural transformation*.

Indeed, Cabral argued, it was prudent for Africans to develop critical dialogues and “real” relationships with precolonial and traditional African histories, cultures, and struggles, but he also cautioned them to keep in mind the ways in which racial colonialism and Eurocentrism, and the struggles *against* racial colonialism and *for* revolutionary re-Africanization, impacted and affected modern African histories, cultures, and struggles, consequently creating whole new notions of “Africa,”—that is, African cultures and traditions. What is more, and what is not always readily apparent, is that the dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization calls into question the very definition of what it means—ontologically, existentially, and phenomenologically speaking—to *be* “African”—that is, “African” in a world dominated by European imperialism or, to put it another way, it calls into question what it means to be “black” in a white supremacist colonial capitalist world. The dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization at its core, then, redefines “Africanity,” or “blackness,” if you will. It finds sustenance in Fanon’s (1968) faithful words in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he declared: “Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men,” of a “new humanity,” and the “‘thing’ which has been colonized becomes man”—by which he means *becomes human, becomes African* by providing revolutionary answers to the question(s) of liberation and the question(s) of identity—“during the same process by which it frees itself” (pp. 36–37).

There is a deep, critical self-reflexive dimension to Cabral’s concept of “return to the source,” one which, similar to Fanon’s critical theory of revolutionary decolonization, openly acknowledges that the racially colonized transforms, not simply the racial colonizers, but themselves through the dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization. Their theory and praxis, situated in a specific historical moment, emerges from the lived-experiences of their actually endured struggles, which in one way connects them to the past but, in another way, connects them to the *postcolonial* future. Here the Frankfurt School critical theorist Max Horkheimer’s (1972) words come into play: “The Critical Theorist’s vocation is the struggle to which his thought belongs. Thought is not something independent, to be separated from this struggle” (p. 245). The “return to the source,” then, should not under any circumstances be a return to tradition in its stasis or in its freeze-framed form, but, as Fanon (1968) has firmly stated, critical theorists—he uses terms such as “the native intellectual,” “the native writer,” and “the man of culture”—who wish to *think* and *act* in the anti-imperialist interests of the national (as well as international) liberation struggles of the wretched of the earth “ought to use the past [read: indigenous traditions, narratives, histories, heritages,

values, and views] with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope" (p. 232).

The "return," simply said, is not to the past, but to "the source"—or, as I am wont to say closely following Cabral, *sources* (plural). The source(s) of a people's identity and dignity are, according to Cabral (1973), contained in their history, culture and struggle: "A struggle, which while being the organized political expression of a *culture* is also and necessarily a proof not only of *identity* but also of *dignity*" (p. 68, all emphasis in original). A people's history, culture, and struggle (and we may add language [see Fanon, 1967, pp. 17–40]) contain and carry their thought-, belief-, and value-systems and traditions; these systems and traditions are—under "normal" circumstances—ever-evolving, always contradicting, countering, and overturning, as well as building on and going beyond the ideologies and theories, and the views and values of the past. Which is why, further, the "return" is not and should not be to the past or any "dead" traditions, but to those things (spiritual and material, natural and supernatural, or concrete and abstract) from our past (e.g., theories, ideologies, views, and values) which will enable us to construct a present and future that is (or would be) consistently conducive to the highest, healthiest, and most humane modes of human existence and human experience: hence, we come back once again to *revolutionary humanism*.<sup>15</sup>

Cabral's (1979) concept of "return to the source" is doubly distinguished in its contributions to Africana critical theory in that it enables us to critique two dominant tendencies in Africana liberation theory and praxis. The first tendency is that of the vulgar and narrow-minded nationalists who seek, or so it seems, to expunge every aspect of European culture, collapsing it almost completely with European racialization and colonization, without coming to the critical realization that "a people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be culturally free unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures, they return to the upwards paths of their own culture" (p. 143). To "return" to the "upwards paths of [Africans'] own culture" would mean side-stepping the narrow-minded nationalists' knee-jerk reaction to everything European or non-African, and it would also mean making a critical and, even more, a dialectical distinction between white supremacy and Eurocentrism, on the one hand, and Europe and other cultures' authentic contributions to human culture and civilization that have, or could potentially, benefit the whole of humanity, on the other hand.

The second tendency that Cabral's concept of "return to the source" strongly condemns are those, usually Europeanized, petit bourgeois, alienated Africans living in colonial metropolises, who seem to uncritically praise Africa's precolonial histories and cultures without coming to terms with the firm fact that:

Without any doubt, underestimation of the cultural values of African peoples, based upon racist feelings and the intention of perpetuating exploitation by the foreigner, has done much harm to Africa. But in the face of the vital need for progress, the following factors or behavior would be no less harmful to her: unselective praise; systematic exaltation of virtues without condemning defects; blind acceptance of the values of the culture without considering what is actually or potentially negative, reactionary or regressive; confusion between what is the expression of an objective and historical material reality and what appears to be a spiritual creation of the result of a special nature; absurd connection of artistic creations, whether valid or not, to supposed racial characteristics; and, finally, non-scientific or ascientific critical appreciation of the cultural phenomenon. (p. 150)

Cabral advocated a "critical analysis of African cultures" and, in so doing, he developed a distinct dialectical approach to Africa's wide-ranging histories, cultures, and struggles. This is extremely important to emphasize because too often Africa has been, and continues to be, engaged as though its histories, cultures, and peoples are either completely homogeneous or completely heterogeneous; as if it were impossible for the diverse and dynamic cultures of Africa to simultaneously possess commonalities and distinct differences. Cabral's cultural philosophy, also, includes a unique comparative dimension that recommends placing what Africans consider the "best" of their culture into critical dialogue with the contributions and advances of other, non-African cultures. This, he argued, was important in order to get a real sense of what Africa has contributed to world culture and civilization and to discover what world culture and civilization has contributed and currently continues to offer Africa. In his own words:

The important thing is not to waste time in more or less hair-splitting debates on the specificity or non-specificity of African cultural values, but to look upon these values as a conquest by a part of mankind for the common heritage of all mankind, achieved in one or several phases of its evolution. The important thing is to proceed to critical analysis of African cultures in the light of the liberation movement and the demands of progress—in the light of this new stage in the history of Africa. We may be aware of its value in the framework of universal civilization, but to compare its value with that of other cultures, not in order to decide its superiority or its inferiority, but to determine, within the general framework of the struggle for progress, what contribution African culture has made and must make and contributions it can or must receive.

The liberation movement must, as we have said, base its action on thorough knowledge of the culture of the people and be able to assess the elements of this culture at their true worth, as well as the different levels it reaches in each social category. It must likewise be able to distinguish within the totality of the people's cultural values the essential and secondary, the positive and negative, the progressive and reactionary, the strengths and weaknesses. This

is necessary by virtue of the demands of the struggle and in order to be able to center its action on the essential without forgetting the secondary, to instigate development of positive and progressive elements and to fight, with subtlety but strictness, negative and reactionary elements; finally so that it can make effective use of strengths and remove weaknesses, or transform them into strengths. (p. 150)

History and culture, as we see here, play a special part in national liberation, and Cabral argued that careful and critical analysis of the specificities of African cultures and ethnicities is equally, if not more important, in national liberation struggles than broad-based theories touting everything from a distinct “black soul” and “African personality” to a collective African mind and African communalism. Not only were many of these theories, from Cabral’s point of view, historically, culturally, and sociologically inaccurate, but they were also extremely detrimental since they often glossed over important differences and precluded historical materialist and dialectical materialist interpretations of culture in the development of particular African societies—precolonial, colonial, or neocolonial. Moreover, from his African historical materialist perspective, the catch-all concepts and umbrella theories about Africa had a tendency to consistently downplay the many ways in which ethnicity, class, and religion often influenced participation, or nonparticipation, in either “true” or “false” forms of decolonization and re-Africanization.

However, Cabral also did not believe that endless hours should be spent searching for minute details in efforts to distinguish one African cultural or ethnic group from another. What was, and what remains, most important is that Africans critically analyze and assess their own histories, cultures, and struggles, and—this should be strongly stressed—develop a deeper comparative dimension in terms of placing their cultures into critical dialogue, not only with each other, but with other, non-African cultures, especially those involved in antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist, among other anti-imperialist struggles. Elsewhere I have argued that a strong or, rather, *revolutionary* humanist strain runs through Cabral’s contributions to critical theory, and here we may observe, again, his principled stand *against* imperialism and *for* revolutionary humanism (Rabaka, 2009). Even more, here we can see that in promoting a critical comparative dimension to the national liberation struggle, Cabral connected Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau’s national culture with global culture, their national history with world history, and, most significantly, their national struggle with international struggles.

His conceptions of national history and national culture indelibly informed his notion of the national liberation struggle. For instance, one would be hard-pressed to provide an answer to Cabral’s (1979, p. 75) cryptic question: “Against whom are our people struggling?”—or, à la

Cabral, Serequeberhan's (1994, p. 32) more recent query: "[W]hat are the people of Africa trying to free themselves from and what are they trying to establish?"—unless she or he possessed a critical cognizance of the roots or "sources" of the particular history and culture in question; ever-willing and able to critically inquire into *what* and *how* specific historical, cultural, social, and political predicaments and impediments have been, and are *being*, transversed and transpired. In my view, though Cabral offers the most fully developed initial statement on revolutionary re-Africanization, when it comes to answering Cabral's critical question above, we would do well to return to Fanon (1968), who captured this conundrum best when he astutely stated:

A national culture is not a folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people's true nature. It is not made up of inert dregs of gratuitous actions, that is to say actions which are less and less attached to the ever-present reality of the people. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. A national culture in underdeveloped countries should therefore take its place at the very heart of the struggle for freedom which these countries are carrying on. . . . No one can truly wish for the spread of African culture if he [or she] does not give practical support to the creation of the conditions necessary to the existence of that culture; in other words, to the liberation of the whole continent. (pp. 233, 235)

Fanon's concept of national culture connects with Cabral's critical theory in so far as both of their thought suggests a reliance on (or, rather, a "return" to) those elements and instruments which the subjugated population have employed, and may continue to employ, to "describe, justify, and praise the action[s] through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence." This means nothing less than the oppressed undergoing a process of "transvaluation of values" (Marcuse, 1989, p. 282) from the existing imperialist social setup and a "revolution in values" (Marcuse, 1973) that totally contradicts and overturns imperialist values, which are obstructions to the veritable creation of new human beings who envision and seek to bring into being a new humanity and a new society (see Fanon, 1968, p. 36). Cabral's critical "return to the source," understood as a "cultural revolution," comprehended as revolutionary re-Africanization, at its core calls for—to borrow Marcuse's phrase—a "transvaluation of values." That is to say, Cabral's critical "return to the source," which unequivocally advocates cultural revolution and revolutionary re-Africanization, is a rejection of "traditional," "conventional," "established," or "accepted" imperialist values and, what is more, retrogressive precolonial or traditional African views and values. His "return to the source," in this sense, is more

of a kind of historical and cultural critical consciousness-raising, a form of radical political education, social(ist) (re)organization, and revolutionary praxis that requests that or, rather, challenges the wretched of the earth to remain cognizant at all times of "our own situation" and "be aware of our things" (Cabral, 1979, pp. 56–57). "We must respect those things of value," contended Cabral, "which are useful for the future of our land, for the advancement of our people" (p. 57).

A "transvaluation of values," first, requires that we "be aware of our things." Meaning, we should possess an intimate knowledge of our past and present colonial and anticolonial history and culture. Second, it necessitates that we "respect those things of value, which are useful for the future of our land, for the advancement of our people." That is, "those things of value" which will enable us to create a new, *postimperialist* society; a society without poverty and privilege; a society free from domination and exploitation; a society that utilizes science and technology as instruments of liberation as opposed to tools of domination; a society whose ultimate aim is the constant creation of those "new human beings" Fanon (1968) wrote so passionately about in *The Wretched of the Earth* (p. 36). Such a society, further, demands what the Frankfurt School critical theorist Herbert Marcuse (1989) termed a "transvaluation of values" and, even more, it presupposes a new type of human being who:

rejects the performance principles governing the established societies; a type of man who has rid himself of the aggressiveness and brutality that are inherent in the organization of established society, and in their hypocritical, puritan morality; a type of man who is biologically incapable of fighting wars and creating suffering; a type of man who has a good conscience of joy and pleasure and who works collectively and individually for a social and natural environment in which such an existence becomes possible. (p. 282)

The new human beings with new values possess a new worldview, which is the determinate negation of the presently established imperialist worldview and value-system. The connection between one's worldview and value-system should be stressed because it is precisely these things which, to a certain extent, determine a person's thought and behavior. An individual's worldview and value-system becomes their "second nature" and as such provide beliefs, norms, and aspirations which motivate them, either consciously or unconsciously, to think and act *for* or *against* the imperialist world-system (see Marcuse, 1964, 1965a; Wamba-Dia-Wamba, 1991). Here, then, we have witnessed that "true," or, rather, revolutionary re-Africanization has both universal and particular dimensions, it is simultaneously national and international, regional and continental, as well as revolutionary Pan-Africanist and revolutionary humanist. Fanon's intense emphasis on the ongoing radical political education and radical political participation of both the



party and the people in the process of revolutionary decolonization seems to logically lead to an intense emphasis on revolutionary re-Africanization. Although his work only hints at what I am calling here "re-Africanization," it seems safe to say that many of the implicit questions he had regarding re-Africanization were offered initial, explicit answers by Amílcar Cabral in the twentieth century and now, in the twenty-first century, these questions are being offered answers by the discourse and development of Africana critical theory.

Above, Cabral's concept of "return to the source" was demonstrated to be more a kind of historical and cultural critical consciousness-raising, a form of radical political education, social(ist) (re)organization, and revolutionary praxis that requests that or, rather, challenges the wretched of the earth to remain cognizant at all times of "our own situation" and "be aware of our things." "We," Cabral continued, "must respect those things of value which are useful for the future of our land, for the advancement of our people." Clearly he gathered much from Fanon, even Fanon's ambiguous offerings with regard to re-Africanization. Is it possible that Cabral interpreted Fanon to include what I am calling "revolutionary re-Africanization" in his, Fanon's, articulation of the people's need for radical "political education"? Is it plausible to contend that Cabral may have detected this deficit in Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization and, decidedly and duly, took it upon himself to develop it? An additional question should be asked here: are there inherent, even if not always readily apparent, cultural dimensions implied in Fanon's conception of radical "political education"? I am inclined to answer in the affirmative on all accounts.

However, whether Cabral did or did not consciously seek to build on and go beyond Fanon seems all but beside the point because, as I have demonstrated above, Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization and emphasis on radical political education seems to logically lead to questions of culture: questions such as *whose* culture, and/or *which* specific aspects of culture—precolonial, colonialist, capitalist, communist, and/or socialist culture—would be most useful in Africans' efforts to rescue, reclaim, and re-create their distinct humanity and historical inheritance(s)? Africana critical theory argues that—albeit often unnamed—*revolutionary re-Africanization* has been and remains integral to radical and revolutionary Africans' answers to these questions, always and ever showing a critical aversion to colonialist and capitalist culture and, although flirting from time to time with communism and socialism, it would seem that it is the radical and revolutionary aspects of precolonial African histories, cultures, and struggles which have most consistently been at the heart of the revolutionary re-Africanization process(es).

When Cabral admonishes the wretched of the earth to remain cognizant at all times of "our own situation" and "be aware of our things," his thought

seems to be in direct dialogue with Fanon's work, and the continuity within the Africana tradition of critical theory that I began this section asserting is, once again, readily revealed. Observe here the similarities with what Fanon (1968) wrote and what Cabral asserted above about the wretched of the earth remaining cognizant at all times of "our own situation" and "be[ing] aware of our things":

The greatest task before us is to understand at each moment what is happening in our country. We ought not to cultivate the exceptional or to seek for a hero, who is another form of leader. We ought to uplift the people; we must develop their brains, fill them with ideas, change them and make them into human beings. We once more come up against that obsession of ours—which we would like to see shared by all African politicians—about the need for effort to be well informed, for work which is enlightened and freed from its historic intellectual darkness. To hold a responsible position in an underdeveloped country is to know that in the end everything depends on the education of the masses, on the raising of the level of thought, and on what we are too quick to call "political teaching." (pp. 196–197)

It would seem that what Fanon is referring to here as "political teaching" is inextricable from historical and cultural teaching. He asserted that "[w]e ought to uplift the people; we must develop their brains, fill them with ideas, change them and make them into human beings." In "uplift[ing] the people, in "develop[ing] their brains" and "fill[ing] them with ideas" the question of *whose* and *which* "ideas" will be employed in the "uplift" efforts remains, and it is here that Fanon's implicit allusions to revolutionary re-Africanization, once again, resolutely resurface. In "chang[ing] them"—meaning, the people—and "mak[ing] them into human beings," the question of which specific type or, rather, what particular kind of "human beings" does Fanon have in mind must be raised. To be sure, as he repeatedly states throughout *The Wretched of the Earth*, he is not advocating that "the people" take Europeans or European Americans as their models, going so far to sardonically say, "We have better things to do than to follow that same Europe" and, further, "[w]e today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe" (p. 312).

Fanon's explicit conception of radical "political education" is deeply connected to his implicit emphasis on revolutionary re-Africanization; a re-Africanization that takes Césaire's critical "return" to "the African past," with its "communal societies," its "societies that were . . . anti-capitalist," its "democratic societies," its "cooperative societies, [and] fraternal societies," as its theoretical grip and grounding point of departure. Along with Césaire, Fanon characteristically acknowledged the innumerable "faults" of these precolonial African societies but, again similar to Césaire, he believed that

they contained and could convey views and “values that could still make an important contribution to the world.” Therefore, an important element of Fanon’s implicit theory of revolutionary re-Africanization—a point, as we have seen above, that Cabral explicitly deepened and developed—centers on *the revolutionary re-creation of “Africans,”* as well as their cultures and traditions. Taking his cue from Césaire’s summoning of African revolutionaries to “invent souls,” Fanon’s conception of radical “political education” intensely emphasized that both the party and the people should re-create and develop dialectical rapports and more critical relationships with every aspect of their cultures and respective regional or ethnic traditions:

Now, political education means opening their minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence; as Césaire said, it is “to invent souls.” To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people. In order to put all this into practice, in order really to incarnate the people, we repeat that there must be decentralization in the extreme. The movement from the top to the bottom and from the bottom to the top should be a fixed principle, not through concern for formalism but because simply to respect this principle is the guarantee of salvation. It is from the base that forces mount up which supply the summit with its dynamic, and make it possible dialectically for it to leap ahead. (pp. 197–198)

Fanon’s implicit theory of revolutionary re-Africanization, then, is not in any way about going backward to “the African past,” no matter how glorious many may believe it to be, but it is decidedly about “dialectically . . . leap[ing] ahead” to the *post-imperialist* Pan-African future. Emphasis should be placed on a “*post-imperialist* Pan-African future” here because Fanon warned of “the pitfalls of national consciousness” and asserted that the ultimate aim of a truly revolutionary decolonization and national liberation struggle should be connected to and inextricable from not only the national liberation struggles of neighboring nations but the liberation of the entire African continent (pp. 148–205). The creation and spread of national consciousness is extremely important, but it should only be temporary, according to the requirements of revolutionary national liberation struggle. That being said, nationalism cannot and should not stand as a substitute for a radical political program. If the party is truly decentralized, and if the people are really provided with radical political education, then, Fanon’s words—specifically, “the movement from the top to the bottom and from

the bottom to the top should be a fixed principle"—will have been heard and, even more, these words will have been brought to life, they will have become a motive force, they will have moved, literally, *from the level of abstract ideas to the level of concrete action*.

Nationalism elicits certain ideas and actions, where the synthesis of revolutionary Pan-Africanism with an elastic democratic socialism—of course, modified to meet the special needs of Africa and Africans—provokes other kinds of dialectical ideas and critical actions. The point here is not to negate the need for national consciousness, but to remind my readers that national consciousness, which is an extremely important part of the dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization, cannot and should be confused with *social* and *political consciousness*. Once again, then, we see that the Fanonian decentralized party's program of radical political education simultaneously has cultural, social, political, and economic aspects, and these combined elements of Fanon's articulation of "political education" suggest revolutionary re-Africanization. Fanon continues the caveat concerning nationalism's temporary utility and the ongoing necessity of radical political education, even after national liberation or "independence" is achieved:

[N]ationalism, that magnificent song that made the people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters, and dies away on the day that independence is proclaimed. Nationalism is not a political doctrine, nor a program. If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness. The nation does not exist in a program which has been worked out by revolutionary leaders and taken up with full understanding and enthusiasm by the masses. The nation's effort must constantly be adjusted into the general background of underdeveloped countries. The battle line against hunger, against ignorance, against poverty, and against unawareness ought to be ever present in the muscles and the intelligence of men and women. The work of the masses and their will to overcome the evils which have for centuries excluded them from the mental achievements of the past ought to be grafted onto the work and will of all underdeveloped peoples. On the level of underdeveloped humanity there is a kind of collective effort, a sort of common destiny. (p. 203)

Revolutionary re-Africanization must not under any circumstances be confused with "regression." It is not an anachronistic wish to "return" Africa and Africans to their precolonial past. It is not a nostalgic nationalism that vulgarly views Africa and Africans' precolonial past from a paradisiacal perspective. It is not a romanticization or erasure of all of Africa and Africans' precolonial wrongs and "regressions." Quite the contrary, revolutionary re-Africanization is the Ghanaian concept of *sankofa* put into principled

practice in the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization. In essence, *sankofa* entails taking from the past those things which are deemed to be most useful in the present with the ultimate intention of moving forward, of making positive progress (Tedla, 1995). In other words, *sankofa* boils down to *the benevolent use of knowledge from the past to positively alter the present and ensure the future*. From the point of view of Africana critical theory, *sankofa* has always been and remains at the heart of Fanon's thought and texts, especially his discourse on revolutionary decolonization. His words are haunted by, nay, ever weighted with the *sankofa* concept, for instance, as when he wrote above: "We once more come up against that obsession of ours—which we would like to see shared by all African politicians—about the need for effort to be well informed, for work which is enlightened and freed from its historic intellectual darkness." It was Fanon as well who wrote in the immediately foregoing passage: "The work of the masses and their will to overcome the evils which have for centuries excluded them from the mental achievements of the past ought to be grafted onto the work and will of all underdeveloped peoples."

If we take Fanon at his word, then, he is unequivocally asserting that Africans, continental and diasporan, should put *sankofa* into principled practice. However, Africana critical theory is quick to contend, as continental and diasporan Africans practice *sankofa* they should duly and diligently bear in mind Cabral's important caveat: "A people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be culturally free unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures, they return to the upwards paths of their own culture." Therefore, as continental and diasporan Africans practice *sankofa* they cannot put on blinders and attempt to block out the authentic advances in human culture and civilization that their oppression and exploitation has, ironically, helped to make possible. This is a hard and bitter truth, and one that does not and may never sit well with continental and diasporan Africans, but it is a hard and bitter truth which nonetheless must of necessity be incorporated into the contemporary practice of *sankofa* and production of Africana critical theory. To really and truly "return" to the "upwards paths of [Africans'] own culture," to authentically engage in *sankofa* at this point in Africana and world history would mean, must mean side-stepping the narrow-minded nationalists' knee-jerk reaction to everything European or non-African. Inherent in the theory and praxis of *sankofa*, actually at its heart, is a distinct dialectic—a dialectic that enables continental and diasporan Africans practicing *sankofa* to make critical and, even more, dialectical distinctions between white supremacy and Eurocentrism, on the one hand, and Europe and other cultures' authentic contributions to human culture and civilization, on the other hand. Perhaps, nowhere is this *sankofian* dialectic more pronounced in Fanon's discourse than in his

intellectual history-making repudiations and modifications of Marxism in the anti-imperialist interests of Africa and Africans, among the other wretched of the earth.

**THE RIDDLES OF REVOLUTIONARY FANONISM—MUCH MORE THAN MARXISM IN BLACKFACE: FANON'S CRITICAL MODIFICATION OF MARXISM IN THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST INTERESTS OF AFRICA AND AFRICANS, AMONG THE OTHER WRETCHED OF THE EARTH**

It is important, here at the outset, for us not to confuse what I am referring to here as "revolutionary Fanonism" with Henry Louis Gates's conception of "critical Fanonism." For Gates "critical Fanonism" entails, not reading Fanon to ascertain what his work offers to the ongoing struggle against imperialism, but an interpretive intertextual exercise that critiques others' interpretations of Fanon, especially if the interpreters attempt to connect Fanon's critical thought to radical political practice. Gates (1999), in "Critical Fanonism," states: "My intent is not to offer a reading of Fanon to supplant these others, but to read, even if summarily, some of these readings of Fanon" (p. 252). Ultimately what Gates provides his readers with is a part poststructuralist, part postmodernist, and part postcolonialist read of Fanon that surreptitiously serves as a theoretical substitute for the Frantz Fanon who decidedly committed himself to: revolutionary decolonization; the Algerian revolution; revolutionary Pan-Africanism; revolutionary humanism; and, a distinct African-centered brand of democratic socialism with, as was witnessed above, serious implications for revolutionary re-Africanization. That Fanon, which is to say, the Fanon who revealingly wrote *A Dying Colonialism, Toward the African Revolution* and, of course, *The Wretched of the Earth*, is tellingly absent from Gates's *Black Skin, White Masks*-based read (or, rather, misread) of Fanon. With his own words, Gates corroborates my above assertions of his proffering a part poststructuralist, part postmodernist, and part postcolonialist Fanon when he, Gates, writes:

Fanon's current fascination for us has something to do with the convergence of the problematic of colonialism with that of subject-formation. As a psychoanalyst of culture, as a champion of the wretched of the earth, he is an almost irresistible figure for a criticism that sees itself as both oppositional and postmodern. And yet there's something Rashomon-like about his contemporary guises. It may be a matter of judgment whether his writings are rife with contradiction or richly dialectical, polyvocal, and multivalent; they are in any event highly porous, that is, wide open to interpretation, and the readings they elicit are, as a result, of unfailing symptomatic interest: Frantz Fanon, not to put too fine a point on it, is a Rorschach blot with legs. (p. 252)

Revolutionary Fanonism does not completely repudiate critical Fanonism, as it utterly understands the importance of, nay, the need to critically read and reread others' interpretations and, it must be said, misinterpretations of Fanon. However, what makes revolutionary Fanonism, well, *revolutionary* is its move above and beyond the interpretations of others' interpretations of Fanon, its "return to the sources" of any form of Fanonism, which has been and remains Fanon's thought and texts, and its earnest efforts to sift through and salvage anything from Fanon's work that might be useful in the ongoing dialectical process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary re-Africanization. Revolutionary Fanonism rejects the domestication and academization of the revolutionary aspects of Fanon's thought and texts, and reemphasizes its radical political implications and innovatively identifies its concrete contributions to critical theory of contemporary society. In this sense, then, revolutionary Fanonism, utilizing the *sankofian* dialectic, is concerned with "returning to the sources" of Fanonism with the express intention of employing Fanon's thought and texts to positively alter the continuing neocolonial present and ensure a really and truly *postcolonial* future.

It can hardly be doubted that Fanonism has increasingly blossomed since Fanon's death almost fifty years ago. However, this can be both a theoretical blessing as well as a conceptual curse because now with all of the critical attention and interpretive interest, instead of actually reading Fanon's work, many are relying on his erstwhile interpreters and critics. As I intimated above, interpreters and critics, indeed, do have their place in Fanonism, but there is absolutely no substitute for critically engaging Fanon on his own terms, and in light of his own heartfelt words. This, of course, is one of the reasons why I have engaged in close textual reading, purposely providing lengthy excerpts of prime passages throughout this work, so that my readers can get a sense of the words and, even more, Fanon's distinct line of logic, which have inspired my analysis, which is to say, Africana critical theory of contemporary society.

Critical Fanonism, it seems to me, is frequently almost purely textual and, in some senses, goes against Fanon's own insurgent aspirations to, and the internal logic of each and every one of his texts which, constantly encourage connecting or, rather, reconnecting ideas to actions, theory to praxis. By incessantly interpreting others' interpretations of Fanon, not only are critical Fanonists or, rather more appropriately, *hermeneutic Fanonists* participating in the most turgid type of (inter)textualism, which ultimately serves as nothing other than a subterfuge for bourgeois academism or elite intellectualism, but they seriously distract and derail their readers from fully engaging the radical political and, I reiterate, *revolutionary* aspects of Fanon's thought and texts.<sup>16</sup> In truth, though, the critical Fanonists are only partially to blame. The other part of the responsibility rests with their

would-be Fanon readers. Fanon, if truth be told, is so much more than what his interpreters claim that he is, and this includes my Africana critical theoretical interpretation. Perhaps, one of the most misunderstood and most misinterpreted elements of Fanon's thought and texts revolves around his critical relationship with Marxism.

Decolonization is the logical consequence of colonization (Kang, 2004; Kawash, 1999; Lazarus, 1999). Therefore, those who would label decolonizers and their discourse "nativists" and "nativism" should read very slowly, and very carefully, the following line from Fanon: "The argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler." That "the native" "chooses" violence, self-defensive violence, as a means toward the end of "total liberation" should surprise no one, and least of all colonialists, capitalists, and those associated with the ruling race, ruling gender, and ruling class(es) of the modern (neo)imperial "world-system" (Fanon, 1968, p. 310). Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had written of the imminent revolution for many years by the time Fanon developed his discourse(s) on revolutionary decolonization. Marx and Engels (1978), as is well known, stated quite cryptically in *The Communist Manifesto*:

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official [bourgeois] society being exploded into the air. (p. 482)

Real or, rather, revolutionary decolonization is essentially this paragraph magnified ten times over, and then dropped into the context of our (post)modern moment of clandestine racial colonialism, or, as Kwame Nkrumah (1965) and Samir Amin (1973) would have it, "neocolonialism." Were one to substitute "colored/colonized" or "racially colonized" for "proletarian" and "proletariat" above, then, perhaps, Fanon's assertion might make more sense. Which is to say, then, that the argument(s) chosen and augmented, adopted and adapted by the racially colonized *were* and *are*, to a certain extent, supplied by the "radical" and "revolutionary" traditions of colonialist and capitalist Europe (Assimeng, 1990; Cox, 1966; Isbister, 2001; Lopes, 1988). One need look no further than C. L. R. James's magisterial *The Black Jacobins* to comprehend that the "first" successful revolution by people of African descent in the modern era was deeply influenced by, and inextricable from, the French Revolution of 1789. However, Fanon (1968) forwards that "Marxist analysis," or any other "radical" or "revolutionary" tradition that does not arise out of the specific concrete historicity (i.e., the life-worlds and life-struggles) of the racially colonized, should be



altered to encompass and suit the needs, as well as address the current neo-colonial crises, of their particular time and circumstances (p. 40).

In "Rescuing Fanon from the Critics," the noted Trinidadian historian Tony Martin (1999), perhaps more so than any other Fanonist, has asserted that although "Fanon's writings reveal the influence of several people—Hegel, Marx, Sartre, and Césaire, to name but a few," most critics and commentators have generally "evaluated his philosophy around the concept of Marxism" (p. 85).<sup>17</sup> However, Fanon, similar to only a handful of Marxist theorists, understood well what Marx meant, writing in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, when he wrote: "The social revolution . . . cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future" (Marx and Engels, 1978, p. 597; quoted in Fanon, 1967, p. 223; see also T. Martin, 1999, p. 86; as well as Ayalew, 1975; Forsythe, 1973). For although "[t]he argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler," it must constantly be kept in mind that Fanon (1968) himself said: "Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem. Everything up to and including the very nature of pre-capitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must here be thought out again" (p. 40). Fanon, therefore, set for himself the task of enhancing ("slightly stretch[ing]") "Marxist analysis." He asserted that "everything" "so well explained by Marx" needed to be, out of historical, cultural, and geographical necessity, "thought out again."

What does it mean to "stretch," to extend and expand "Marxist analysis" in our search for solutions to "the colonial problem"? What does it mean to rethink social transformation in light of the anti-imperial onuses that both colonialism and capitalism present, and specifically—in contradistinction to comrade Karl Marx's corpus—to people of color, to racialized people? Fanon, perhaps, would have replied that there are no social or political panaceas for the plethora of problems which presently plague humanity. Even if "[t]he argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler," "the native" does not and should not conceptually incarcerate, or intellectually emaciate herself or himself in "the colonial vocabulary" (p. 43). Fanon discerned that "Marxist analysis" was part and parcel of capitalism, *not* colonialism.<sup>18</sup> Which is to say that though Marxism may very well provide one of the most comprehensive critical theories of capitalism, it has been and, for the most part, remains shamefully silent concerning colonialism, especially the racial colonialism which has negatively impacted the majority of the human species and their cultures and civilizations.

Indeed, Marx and the *critical* (as opposed to "vulgar," "orthodox," and/or "mechanical") Marxists provide one of, if not "the" most comprehensive and sophisticated critiques of capitalism. However, they have consistently neglected to factor capitalism's interconnections with racism

and colonialism into their analyses. That is why Fanon's emphasis on a more elastic interpretation and application of Marxism, particularly outside of the conventional capitalist context, remains so seminal. He challenged the anticolonialist intellectual-activist to not only be anticolonialist, but also anticapitalist and antiracist. It was the critically acclaimed Caribbean American philosopher Lewis Gordon (1997b), one of the leading and more critical Fanon scholars, who asserted that Fanon's thought might best be characterized as "conjunctive analysis" which critically engaged racism *and* colonialism *and* capitalism (pp. 35–36). The Fanonian intellectual-activist, then, is much more than a mere Marxist disciple. The Fanonian intellectual-activist is more than a mere critical race theorist and anticolonialist. The Fanonian intellectual-activist is not, under any circumstances, a mere academic, ivory tower overseer, or armchair revolutionary. The Fanonian intellectual-activist is, indeed, a critical theorist and revolutionary humanist, and also a constant critic of internalized colonialism, racism, and capitalism on the part of the racially colonized (Osei-Nyame, 2002; Pithouse, 2003). This is the dual mandate that Fanon ascribed to the revolutionary intellectual-activist. Noted Fanon scholar, Nigel Gibson (1999c), eloquently addressed this issue when he wrote: "Rather than applying an *a priori*, a crucial task for the Fanonian intellectual was to confront the intellectual's internalization of colonial ideology that had become mentally debilitating. The native intellectual, therefore, does not simply uncover subjugated knowledges but has to challenge the underdeveloped and Manichaeic ways of thinking produced by colonial rule" (p. 114).

Colonialism inherently gives colonized intellectuals an intellectual inferiority complex. In order to initiate the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization, the anticolonial (on-the-path-to-becoming-a-truly-post-colonial) intellectual must radically rupture their relationship with their (neo)colonial (mis)education and practice critical conceptual generation, putting forward dialectical theory and praxis particular to, and in the best interest of, their specific historical struggle against colonialism, capitalism, and racism, among other (post)modern sociopolitical ills. In a word, colonized intellectuals must "decolonize their minds," as Ngugi (1986) put it, and become revolutionary intellectual-activists. Again, Gibson (1999c) offers insights:

The revolutionary intellectual who explicitly attempts to develop the often conflictual relationship between mental and manual labor, therefore, is grounded in two interpenetrated though different types of knowledge: the explication of subjugated knowledges and knowledges born of resistance, in their myriad (and not simply practical) forms; and what Fanon meant by working out new concepts, namely, the history of the idea of freedom. These knowledges are connected: revolutionary thought is also a conceptualization of the historical memory of struggle. (p. 120)

In “challeng[ing] the underdeveloped and Manichaeian ways of thinking produced by colonial rule” the Fanonian intellectual-activist must also bear in mind what Cabral (1979) contended above: “A people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be free culturally unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor’s culture and other cultures, they return to the upwards paths of their own culture” (p. 143). The Fanonian intellectual-activist, similar to the Cabralian intellectual-activist, has a deeply dialectical rapport and critical relationship with Marxism, one that simultaneously critiques most Marxists’ inattention to racism and colonialism (or, rather, racial colonialism), but greatly appreciates their thoroughgoing critique of capitalism and Marxism’s infamous constantly changing character. From the point of view of Fanon’s critical theoretical framework, Marxism can be effectively used toward anticolonial ends and, more importantly, in the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization. However, here we would do well to keep in mind his admonition that “Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem” (see Ayalew, 1975; W. Hansen, 1997; D. Lloyd, 2003; Moreira, 1989; Rabaka, 2009; C. J. Robinson, 1993; Serequeberhan, 1988).

In *The Class Struggle in France*, Marx wrote: “A new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis. It is, however, just as certain as this crisis” (Marx and Engels, 1978 p. 593, emphasis omitted). For Fanon, it could be said that racial colonialism presented humanity with “a new crisis” and, therefore, “[a] new revolution,” a whole new conception of revolution was required, one that took into consideration not merely the ravaging effects of capitalism, but also those of colonialism and racism. It was incumbent on “the wretched of the earth,” without turning a blind-eye to the predatory and vampiric nature of capitalism, to acutely analyze and assess their own racial and colonial oppression, exploitation, and alienation. The revolutionary intellectual-activists, who think and act in the anti-imperialist interests of and in concert with “the wretched of the earth,” must do precisely what Fanon (1968) admonished them to do at the close of *The Wretched of the Earth*—which is to say, they must “waste no time in sterile litanies and nauseating mimicry” of Eurocentric and capitalist political economy-obsessed Marxists (p. 312).

Fanon forcefully challenged the wretched of the earth’s revolutionary intellectual-activists to intellectually, politically, and culturally “[l]eave . . . Europe” (p. 311). He critically continued: “Let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth” (p. 313). Fanon was well aware that we, like any people involved in a life or death struggle for human liberation, “need a model,” that “we want blueprints and examples.” He earnestly admitted that “[f]or

many among us the European model is the most inspiring" (p. 312). This is so because (neo)colonialist (mis)education exclusively and purposely exposes racially colonized intellectuals to Eurocentric models, social movements, political thought, philosophy, culture, and so on. Racially colonized intellectuals, therefore, are just that, racially *colonized*, and the only way they can decolonize their minds is by plunging themselves into the depths of those elements of their indigenous thought, culture, and traditions—pre-colonial, colonial, and neocolonial—which could potentially aid them in their efforts to develop critical theory and revolutionary praxis. They must, however, do this without losing sight of those "positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures," as Cabral importantly asserted, which could, if employed in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth, provide them not only with critical theories of, but *critical praxes* in and against, the white supremacist colonial capitalist world.

According to Fanon, the "nauseating mimicry" and "imitation" of "the European model" on the part of racially colonized intellectuals, and the racially colonized in general, has led to "mortifying setbacks," which of his four books *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* most explicitly engage these issues. It was both shameful and horrifying to Fanon that as more African countries gained "independence," what Nkrumah (1965) in his conception of neocolonialism called "nominal independence," and as more Africans in the diaspora secured greater access to education and basic civil rights, they not only continued to turn to Europe, but willingly and increasingly deepened and developed their reprehensible racial colonial relationships with European "mother countries." Fanon (1968) fumed:

European achievements, European techniques, and the European style ought no longer to tempt us and to throw us off our balance. When I search for Man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man, and an avalanche of murders. The human condition, plans for mankind, and collaboration between men in those tasks which increase the sum total of humanity are new problems, which demand true inventions. (pp. 312–313)

Fanon dared the racially colonized to leave Europe and think critically about "the new problems, which demand true inventions." The "European game has finally ended," he said, "we must find something different" (p. 312). The "new problems, which demand true inventions" are precisely those problems which the racial and colonial proletariat, as well as the racial colonial peasantry, have long been struggling against: racism and colonialism, and the intersections and interconnections between and betwixt capitalism *and* colonialism *and* racism. Above, when Fanon asserted that "we," the wretched of the earth's revolutionary intellectual-activists, must "combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction," the "new

direction" that he had in mind was one that simultaneously built on and went well beyond Marxist analyses of the vicissitudes and vampiric nature of capitalism. For Fanon, as for Africana critical theorists, Marxism is but one of many theoretical tools or, as Cabral contended, "weapons of theory" to be deployed in the struggle against (neo)imperialism, which includes the new and constantly changing forms of, not only capitalism, but colonialism and racism as well. Europe should not be the measure and model for what it means to be "human," or "civilized," or "cultured," or "modern." In fact, Fanon announced, when the racially colonized intellectual embraces radical "political education" and critical consciousness, which is to say, when the racially colonized intellectual shifts from being racially "colonized" and begins the arduous and protracted process of becoming the wretched of the earth's revolutionary intellectual-activist, anything is possible. Why? Because revolution, real revolution as opposed to theoretical or rhetorical revolution, is nothing other than the concrete creation of historical possibilities, the innovative opening up of historical and cultural alternatives. What may have appeared impossible before the embrace of their revolutionary responsibilities, now seems quite possible to the formerly racially colonized—but, currently on-the-road-to-becoming-a-real-revolutionary—intellectual. Fanon was unequivocally critical of, and critically optimistic about, the wretched of the earth's revolutionary intellectual-activists, declaring: "We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe" (p. 312).

Really now, a Fanonian query begs, what has Europe contributed to human culture and civilization that the racialized and colonized, intellectual-activists or otherwise, should want to spend their entire lives in "nauseating mimicry," uncritically imitating? It will be recalled that I asserted above, *the only way anticolonial intellectual-activists can decolonize their minds is by plunging themselves into the depths of those elements of their indigenous thought, culture, and traditions—precolonial, colonial, and neocolonial—which could potentially aid them in their efforts to develop revolutionary theory and praxis*. It is with this in mind that I return to the important work of the noted Ghanaian philosopher, Kwasi Wiredu (1991), who makes two important points with regard to the discussion at hand. The first point is that "it seems to be a fact about human beings generally that technical progress is apt to outstrip moral insight" (p. 98). In this sense, he continues, "the philosophical thought of a traditional (i.e., preliterate and nonindustrialized) society may hold some lessons of moral significance for a more industrialized society" (p. 98). These comments connect with Fanon's when we recollect his assertion that we must move "in a new direction," and turn our attention to the "new problems, which demand true inventions." The "new direction" that Fanon has in mind here is not a Senghorian Negritude nostalgic embrace

of all things “primitive” in precolonial Africa, but a *sankofian* dialectical and Africana critical theoretical archaeology of those aspects of Africa’s past—precolonial, colonial, neocolonial—that could potentially be utilized in our present struggle(s) for human liberation and a higher level of human life.

Wiredu’s work is insightful in that it helps to highlight, not simply some of the distinct differences between Africana and European thought, but that Africana thought, as with European thought, has aspects that are simultaneously particular and universal, and that European theorists, among others, could gather a great deal from Africana thought (see also Wiredu, 1980, 1995, 1996, 2004). This brings us to the second point that Wiredu’s (1991) work helps to highlight. In his own words:

An obvious fact about the thought of a traditional society is that it is communalistic in orientation. By contrast, the more industrialized a society is, the more individualistic it seems to become. Now it is quite plain that some of the most unlovable aspects of life in the so-called advanced countries are connected with individualism. It is reasonable to expect that a critical examination of individualism in the context of a study of a communally oriented philosophy might yield some useful insights for people engaged in the quest for industrialization as well as for those who are far advanced in that process. Of course, both communalism and individualism may have their strengths and weaknesses. But, an objective appraisal of them is likely to be hampered if studied exclusively from the point of view of any one of these modes of life. (pp. 98–99)

Contemporary continental and diasporan Africans live in both advanced industrial and nonindustrial societies, racial colonial and racist capitalist societies, literate and semiliterate societies and, therefore, the revolutionary intellectual-activists who have been charged by Fanon with the task of searching for solutions to the wretched of the earth’s “new problems, which demand true inventions,” must take all of this into consideration and also heed Wiredu’s words and wisdom when he observed that “both communalism and individualism may have their strengths and weaknesses.” The wretched of the earth’s revolutionary intellectual-activists must undertake “an objective appraisal” of both communalism and individualism, all the while bearing in mind that their assessment “is likely to be hampered if studied exclusively from the point of view of any one of these modes of life.” Wiredu’s work enables the wretched of the earth’s revolutionary intellectual-activists to call into question Eurocentric conceptions of “progress” and “modernization” and also demonstrates that because of, what he terms, “the historical accident of colonialism” Africa may be underdeveloped in many, though not by any means all, areas (p. 98; see also Rodney, 1972, 1990). However, by the same token, his work accents the often-overlooked fact that though Europe may be technically and scientifically overdeveloped when compared to Africa, in many other areas, especially ethics and moral-

ity, Africa (among other “underdeveloped” continents) is arguably more advanced. Wiredu’s ideas on this subject have been recently echoed by Gibson (1999c), who revealingly wrote, “it is now the European who must catch up with the African” (p. 119).

Instead of mindlessly mimicking Eurocentric Marxists, which, if truth be told, most Marxists have been and remain unrepentantly Eurocentric, the revolutionary intellectual-activists who think and act in the anti-imperialist interests of, and in concert with, the wretched of the earth should, employing the *sankofian* dialectic, systematically and critically study their own history, culture, and struggle—precolonial, colonial, and neocolonial—with an eye toward anything and everything that could be employed in the present anti-imperial struggle. Wiredu’s words must be held in mind, and Fanonian intellectual-activists should unceasingly encourage racially colonized, as well as other, intellectuals and academicians to rethink the contributions that non-European and/or so-called underdeveloped cultures could make, not merely to Marxism and other radical political theories, but to contemporary (i.e., twenty-first-century) human culture and civilization in general (see Amin, 1976, 1989, 1990, 1998a, 1998b, 2003; Kosukhin, 1985). Fanon (1968) declared, “Today we are present at the stasis of Europe,” and Eurocentric, capitalist economy-obsessed Marxism is an outgrowth of European thought and culture, which similar to Europe in general has reached an impasse (p. 314). Fanon refused to bite his tongue, even in the midst of his (French, African, and other) Marxist comrades. Long before the postmodernists (and post-Marxists), Fanon noted Marxism’s “obscene narcissism” and pointed to the contradictions at its conceptual core.<sup>19</sup> I quote the pertinent passage at length:

A permanent dialogue with oneself and an increasingly obscene narcissism never ceased to prepare the way for a half delirious state, where intellectual work became suffering and the reality was not at all that of a living man, working and creating himself, but rather words, different combinations of words, and the tensions springing from the meanings contained in words. Yet some Europeans were found to urge the European workers to shatter this narcissism and to break with this unreality. But in general, the workers of Europe have not replied to these calls; for the workers believe, too, that they are part of the prodigious adventure of the European spirit. (Fanon, 1968, p. 313)

Fanon’s critique of Marxism and the European/white proletariat did not stop here. As if defending his embrace and espousal of certain elements of Cesairean Negritude, Pan-Africanism, African nationalism, African socialism, and the African Legion project, Fanon dealt Eurocentric Marxists and white left-liberals a critical theoretical deathblow:

All the elements of a solution to the great problems of humanity have, at different times, existed in European thought. But the action of European men has

not carried out the mission which fell to them, and which consisted of bringing their whole weight violently to bear upon these elements, of modifying their arrangement and their nature, of changing them and finally of bringing the problem of mankind to an infinitely higher plane. (p. 314)

In his unceasing efforts to bring "the problem of mankind to an infinitely higher plane," Fanon challenged white supremacist colonialists and Eurocentric Marxists. This represents a significant contribution to the discourse on revolutionary decolonization insofar as we understand that Fanon took issue with both racial colonialism *and* Eurocentric radicalism. His work went even further to reveal that racially colonized intellectuals, racially colonized politicians, and the racially colonized bourgeoisie were willing to side with white supremacist colonialists if it meant that they could trade places or, at the least, share the spoils with the white supremacist colonialists and recolonize the nominally independent nation in their own nefarious neocolonial interests. However, Fanon acutely asserted: "Under the colonial system, a middle class which accumulates capital is an impossible phenomenon. Now, precisely, it would seem that the historical vocation of an authentic national middle class in an underdeveloped country is to repudiate its own nature in so far as it is bourgeois, that is to say in so far as it is the tool of capitalism, and to make itself the willing slave of that revolutionary capital which is the people" (p. 150).

As for those racially colonized intellectuals coming into a critical consciousness of (neo)colonialism, Fanon cautions them about their embrace of, and conceptual incarceration in, Eurocentric radicalism, Marxist or otherwise. Africa's specific historicity, Africa's particular experience of racial colonialism, and Europe's incessant imperial efforts to *de-Africanize* and *Europeanize* Africa must be borne in mind and integrally incorporated into any theory that seeks to contribute to the liberation of Africa and its diaspora. Marxism does not now, and has never, claimed to speak to the special needs of Africa and Africans. This point should be emphasized, so that if (or, should I say, *when*) (neo)colonized African intellectuals begin to develop an anticolonial critical consciousness and initiate their sincere search for solutions to the problems of Africa and its diaspora they will realize that though Marxism, among many other schools of European thought, may have much to offer black radicalism and Africana revolutionary praxis, European schools of thought, European history and culture, European religion, and European conceptions of science and civilization cannot and should never be used as the primary paradigms and theoretical points of departure for decolonization, re-Africanization, or the blueprints for an authentic *postcolonial* Africa and its diaspora.

The analytical borders and theoretical boundaries of Marxism, thus, are actually too narrow to categorize and conceptually capture Fanon's radi-



cal politics and critical social theory, which to reiterate includes critiques of racism *and* colonialism *and* capitalism *and*, as we will soon see, sexism. Fanon actually extends and expands and, at times, explodes Marxism. He synthesizes it with the wider and too often uncharted Africana world of ideas and the black radical tradition. To uncritically categorize Fanon's dialectical thought and critical theory as "Marxism" (or even "black Marxism," for that matter) and leave it there is similar to attempting to force his feet into a pair of too tight shoes simply because Marxists and others caught in the quagmires of Eurocentric critical theory think the shoes will look good, or are fashionable, on his feet. This, in all intellectual honesty, is utterly unfair to Fanon and, what adds insult to injury, is that when his work is carefully and critically read, when it is critically engaged and the historical and cultural contexts, as well as the social and political milieux in which he composed the texts are taken into critical consideration, then his work, literally his words, defy the lazy labeling and simpleminded synopses of Marxists and others conceptually incarcerated in Eurocentric critical theory. This is, precisely, why Melesse Ayalew (1975), Emmanuel Hansen (1977), Lewis Gordon (1995b), L. Adele Jinadu (1986), Ato Sekyi-Otu (1996), Tsenay Serequeberhan (1994), Renate Zahar (1974), and I (Rabaka, 2009), among others, consider Fanon more an imaginative "innovator" within the Marxist tradition and a too often unrecognized rightful member of the Marxian pantheon than a disciple of Marxism—that is, I should importantly add, if he is to be considered a "Marxist" at all. In 1970, less than a decade after Fanon's untimely death, Marcus Garvey scholar Tony Martin (1999) mused:

Fanon can be considered a Marxist. This is not to say that he adhered rigidly to every word that has come down to us from Marx's pen. He didn't. But he was Marxist in the sense that Lenin or Castro or Mao are Marxist. That is, he accepted Marx's basic analysis of society as given and proceeded from there to elaborate on that analysis and modify it where necessary to suit his own historical and geographical context. (p. 87)

It is the latter part of Martin's last sentence that resonates the deepest with the discussion at hand: Fanon "accepted Marx's basic analysis of society as given and proceeded from there to elaborate on that analysis and modify it where necessary to suit his own historical and geographical context." Clearly Martin and I are not in agreement when he asserts that Fanon "accepted Marx's basic analysis of society as given," because I do not understand how he, Martin, could make such an assertion when, as I am sure he knows all too well, neither Karl Marx nor his myriad disciples engaged the colonial world, or the racial world or, rather, the racial colonial world to the discursive depth and critical detail to which they historically

have and currently continue to the capitalist world (see Marx and Engels, 1972). How could Fanon have “accepted Marx’s basic analysis of society as given” when he consistently emphasized that racial oppression and colonial exploitation, that racism and colonialism, if you will, are equally as oppressive, exploitative, and alienating as capitalism?

To be fair to Martin, whom I greatly intellectually admire, it could be that because Fanon often emphasized the political economy of race, racism, and colonialism in an antiblack racist and white supremacist capitalist world, he is open to being interpreted as a Marxist, especially since the search for and critique of the political economy of “things” in a capitalist society is one of the most common characteristics of Marxism and Marxists. In fact, Martin maintained: “Like the good Marxist that he is, Fanon sees the economic base of most things. This includes racism and colonialism” (p. 88). It is true that Fanon pointed to “the economic base of most things,” especially racism and colonialism, but what distinguishes his work from that of most Marxists are the very varied “things,” the colonial and racial “things,” I should say, that captured his critical theoretical attention and to which he sought to apply Marxism. Fanon, indeed, employed the Marxian method, but he also observed its limitations and deficiencies when we come to the colonial and racial world. Is he automatically a “Marxist” simply because he utilized certain elements of the Marxian method? If so, then, he may also be labeled a Pan-Africanist, African nationalist, African socialist, Negritudist, existentialist, and phenomenologist, among others, as he employed elements of these methods and modes of interpretation as well. Is he really and truly a “Marxist” when his corpus—yes, every single work—in one way or another collapses Marxian critiques of capitalism by pointing to the ways in which capitalism interconnects with and is inextricable from colonialism and racism? Fanon may have “accepted Marx’s basic analysis of [*capitalist*] society as given,” but he, on principle, found Marxism inexcusably inadequate and loathsomely silent when it came to colonial society, or racist society or, heaven help us, a simultaneously white supremacist colonial capitalist society.

I am not denying or taking issue in any way with the intellectual and political fact that “Fanon can be considered a Marxist,” as Martin put it above. I am only emphasizing that he was much more than a Marxist, and that Martin himself hints at as much when he wrote in the latter part of the sentence under scrutiny that Fanon “elaborate[d]” or built on Marx’s analysis and “modif[ied] it where necessary to suit his own historical and geographical context.” It is precisely when and where he “modified”—or “stretched,” as he himself said—Marxism that Fanon made his most enduring contributions to both the discourse on revolutionary decolonization *and* Marxism, bringing them into critical dialogue in a way they had not been before and—Amílcar Cabral’s radical politics and critical social theory

respectfully withstanding—have not been since. In as much as socialism existed long before Karl Marx, and considering Wiredu's, among others', characterization of precolonial and traditional African societies as "communal," it could very well be that Fanon—similar to Sekou Toure (1959, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980), Kwame Nkrumah (1964, 1965, 1970a, 1970b, 1973a, 1973b, 1997), Julius Nyerere (1966, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977), Amilcar Cabral (1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1979), and, to a certain extent, Leopold Senghor (1959, 1961, 1962, 1964a, 1964b, 1970)—was searching for a socialism suitable for Africa and its modern needs. In order for socialism, or any political economic system, to really address the authentic human needs of Africa and Africans, it would have to be grounded in and grow out of Africa's particular history and culture, Africa's transethnic conceptions of social organization, politics, ethics, and so on.<sup>20</sup> Fanon (1968) firmly challenged the wretched of the earth's revolutionary intellectual-activists to develop their own history-, culture-, and struggle-specific radical political and critical social theory to guide their revolutionary praxis, sternly stating:

The Third World ought not to be content to define itself in the terms of values which have preceded it. On the contrary, the underdeveloped countries ought to do their utmost to find their own particular values and methods and a style which shall be peculiar to them. The concrete problem we find ourselves up against is not that of a choice, cost what it may, between socialism and capitalism as they have been defined by men of other continents and of other ages. . . . Capitalist exploitation and cartels and monopoly are the enemies of underdeveloped countries. . . . The choice of a socialist regime, a regime which is completely orientated toward the people as a whole and based on the principle that man is the most precious of all possessions, will allow us to go forward more quickly and more harmoniously, and thus make impossible that caricature of society where all economic and political power is held in the hands of a few who regard the nation as a whole with scorn and contempt. (p. 99)

Fanon was, indeed, prosocialist, but he was against Eurocentric conceptions of socialism being imposed or superimposed on Africa and Africans either by European or, it must be underscored, by African Marxists or black Marxists (Assimeng, 1990; Camara, 2008; Keller and Rothchild, 1987; Ottaway, 1986; Rodney, 1981; see also the *Journal of African Marxists*, 1982–1987). He understood "Marxist analysis" to be part of "the colonial vocabulary" and, therefore, it needed to be called into question along with everything else in "the colonial situation" (Fanon, 1968, pp. 40, 43, 37). He was, to put it mildly, *suspicious* of the thought and texts that emanated from Europe, since it was this same Europe that perpetually spoke of "the welfare of Man" yet "murder men everywhere they find them" (pp. 311–312). He was, indeed, *suspicious* of Marx and his disciples' chosen agents of social

revolution, the metropolitan proletariat, particularly the white workers of Europe and America, who were purportedly destined to deal capitalism its deathblow. Fanon, in fact, had little or no faith in white workers rising up in revolution against capitalism because, as he observed above, "the [white] workers believe, too, that they are part of the prodigious adventure of the European spirit." White workers, as well as white Marxists and the white bourgeoisie, simply did not, dare I say *do not*, understand a crucial historical and cultural fact: "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples" (p. 102; see also Rodney, 1967, 1970, 1972). And, if the European and European American Marxists should fix their faces to claim that they are well aware of all of this, then, the question remains: Why have they consistently neglected to factor colonialism and racism into their theories of socialist (or communist) revolution? This query, of course, leads to other critical questions, questions I—along with, it seems to me, W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, Claudia Jones, Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Julius Nyerere, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Samir Amin, Amiri Baraka, Audre Lorde, Cedric Robinson, bell hooks, Cornel West, Manning Marable, Joy James, and Robin Kelley, among many others—have longed to ask and, to be perfectly honest, have been asking: If colonialism and racism are finally factored into Marxian critical theories of contemporary society, then, will the end goal of their (or, should I say, *our*) socialist (or communist) revolution remain an anticapitalist classless society? Wouldn't a new revolutionary agenda be needed, one that includes a *telos* of an antiracist, anticolonialist, *and* anticapitalist classless society? What about the distinct forms of domination and discrimination that women experience, especially in patriarchal capitalist societies? What of women of color in white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist societies? What about homosexuals in heterosexist white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist societies? I am almost certain that my readers register the point that Fanon and I are making here. The critical questions are, literally, infinite when asked from the epistemically open and intensely elastic Africana critical theoretical framework.

Fanon was not fooled by the radical rhetoric of the Eurocentric Marxists. He stated, almost emphatically, that "[t]ruth"—meaning, that which is positive and progressive and in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth—is precisely that which "hurries on the break-up of the colonialist regime" (p. 50). It was only through the radical, nay, the revolutionary transformation of self and society that "the break-up of the colonialist regime" was to be brought into being. However, and this is where and why Fanon, the African socialists, and the so-called black Marxists remain at odds with the orthodox and capitalist economy-obsessed Eurocentric Marxists, "the colonialist regime" is inseparable from *the capitalist regime*,

and both the colonialist and capitalist regimes are utterly inextricable from *the racist regime*. To reiterate, Fanon, the African socialists, and the so-called black Marxists do not deny the pervasive and predatory nature of capitalism but, and here's the real rub, they cannot in good conscience (or, in "good faith," as Sartre might have said) repudiate the ravaging and retarding effects of racism; they cannot downplay and diminish the tragic historic fact that racial colonialism and neocolonialism have negatively impacted Africa and its diaspora as much as, nay, in certain instances, *even more than* capitalism; and, finally, they cannot overlook the myriad ways in which racism, colonialism, and capitalism constantly intersect and interconnect in the life-worlds and lived-experiences of the wretched of the earth (Bogues, 2003; Kelley, 2002; Marable, 1983, 1987, 1996; C. W. Mills, 1987, 2003a; C. J. Robinson, 2000, 2001).

Marx asserted, as Fanon soon would, that in forging the revolution the oppressed change themselves, because the revolution requires and brings into being radical transformations of such massive proportions, that nothing existing in the "new" society remains as it was prior to the revolution. That is to say that the revolution that Marx envisioned, and the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization that Fanon (1968) conceived, were to be "total" and "complete," and for Fanon, in contradistinction to Marx, "[w]ithout any period of transition" (p. 35).<sup>21</sup> As the society is altered, so are the individuals who collectively constitute that society. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels (1970) contended:

Both for the production on a mass scale of the Communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, in a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew. (p. 87; see also Marx and Engels, 1968)

Revolution, according to Marx, was "necessary," not merely for the forging and fostering of a "new" society, but for the development of "new" selves. Marx, again similar to Fanon, felt that "the ruling class cannot be overthrown any other way." Oppressed people, to put it bluntly, have very few options; they either come to the painful conclusion that they are, or have been, forced to fight, or they succumb and sink back, deeper and deeper, into their present state(s) of dehumanization and neocolonization. Revolutionary decolonization was Fanon's solution to "the colonial problem." However, we are to be reminded here that he began his first book by stating: "I do not come with timeless truths" (Fanon, 1967, p. 7). This means, quite simply, that Fanon foresaw the need for future generations

of *critical* theorists to revise and retheorize the concept of revolutionary decolonization in light of the existential issues of their specific life-worlds and life-struggles.

It was, indeed, Fanon (1968) who wrote without rancor or self-righteousness: "Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it" (p. 206). It seems safe to say that "true" decolonization remains on our revolutionary agenda as we come to the close of the first decade of the twenty-first century, and we, as Fanon exhorted, are obliged, "out of relative obscurity," to "discover [our] mission, fulfill it, or betray it." This brings us to several key questions, many of which have been looming large in the background throughout the aforementioned "forms" of Fanonism: What were Fanon's thoughts on sexism and women's liberation? Do male revolutionaries have a special responsibility to make sure that women's decolonization and women's liberation are an integral part of the "mission," and are explicitly included on the revolutionary agenda of their generation? Are males really and truly "revolutionary" if they turn a blind eye to, or downplay the paramount importance of women's decolonization and women's liberation?

Many of these questions are answered when and where we approach Fanon's thought and texts employing radical/revolutionary feminist and womanist research methods and modes of interpretation. This line of logic is, perhaps, most pronounced when and where we observe Fanon's critiques of the ways in which colonialism overlaps, interlocks, and intersects with, not only racism and capitalism, but also sexism, and particularly patriarchy. In other words, race is not only colonized and inextricable from colonialism in the realm of racial colonialism, but it is also gendered and hypersexualized or, rather, eroticized and exotified in simultaneously *racist colonialist capitalist sexist* situations, which are always and ever, however sometimes subtly, *white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist* contexts. Therefore, it is in the unequivocal interest of aiding the wretched of the earth of the twenty-first century in their (or, rather, *our*) efforts to "discover [our] mission" (or multiple missions) that we now critically engage and expound on Fanon's frequently forgotten contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation.

## NOTES

1. A note on proletarian alienation is necessary here, as alienation has been and remains a core concept in Marxism. In *The Holy Family*, Marx (1966) stated: "The propertied class and the class of the proletariat represent the same human self-alienation. But the former feels comfortable and confirmed in this self-alienation, knowing that this alienation is its own power and possessing in it the semblance of

a human existence. The latter feels itself ruined in this alienation and sees in it its impotence and the actuality of an inhuman existence" (p. 367). What is important to observe here is Marx's emphasis on the fact that the proletariat's alienation, "the actuality of [their] inhuman existence," is based on the bourgeoisie's "semblance of a human existence." Marx described the life-worlds and lived-experiences of the bourgeoisie as merely "the semblance of a human existence" because, if truth be told, they, too, are alienated from an authentic human existence. We will witness below how Fanon, among other Africana intellectual-activists, twists and turns the Marxist conception of alienation toward the life-worlds and life-struggles of continental and diasporan Africans in order to reconceive and reconstruct it to speak to the special needs of the racialized and neocolonized in purportedly "postcolonial" periods.

2. My conception of the (white) proletariat and their role in Marxist theory of revolution has been influenced by, of course, Marx (1967) and Marx and Engels (1958, 1970, 1975a) but also Balibar (1977), Briefs (1937), Draper (1977, 1978, 1987, 1989, 2005), Ehrenberg (1992), Kautsky (1964), Lenin (1932, 1960c, 1960d, 1965c, 1976), A. Lewis (1911), Lovell (1988), Ti. McCarthy (1978), Naimark (1979), Perkins (1993), E. P. Thompson (1966), Trotsky (1932), and Wessell (1979).

3. My contention here that "in the end it all comes down to, not necessarily the way they [critical theorists] shift and bend the critical theoretical method for their particular purposes, but *what* they shift and bend the critical theoretical method to address *and* alter" is undergirded by a couple of the more noteworthy works in Marxian methods—for example, Beamish (1992), Bologh (1979), Kain (1986), Moseley (1993, 1997), Ollman (2003), Rattansi (1989), and Sayer (1979). What is interesting to observe here, though, is the intellectual insularity of most of these texts and their recalcitrant refusal to turn the Marxian method toward anything other than Europe, European America, and/or the critique of capitalism.

4. In Marxian discourse it is generally accepted that no other class can fulfill the historical and revolutionary role Marx assigned to the proletariat, because the "proletariat executes the sentence that private property inflicts on itself by creating the proletariat, just as it carries out the verdict that wage-labor pronounces on itself by creating wealth for others and misery for itself." Marx (1966) continued, "When the proletariat triumphs, it does not thereby become the absolute side of society because it triumphs only by transcending itself and its opposite. Then the proletariat and its determining antithesis, private property, disappear" (p. 367). To those who think they detect a *deification of the proletariat* in Marx's discourse, he responded that the "historical action" of the proletariat, which is to say the concrete overthrow of the bourgeoisie and their capitalist cartels, is summoned by the very severity of the proletariat's sad situation. "It is not a question of what this or that proletarian or even the whole proletariat momentarily imagines to be the aim," Marx declared. "It is a question of what the proletariat is and what it consequently is historically compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is prescribed, irrevocably and obviously, in its own situation in life as well as in the entire organization of contemporary civil society" (p. 368). It would seem that much of Marx's theory of revolution hinges on the lived-experiences, that is, the immiseration of the proletariat in capitalist society and the ways in which these lived-experiences inspire or, rather, incite "historical action" and democratic socialist transformation. However, it is not always

nor altogether clear whether Marx's emphasis on the role of the proletariat in his vision and version of democratic socialist revolution automatically and in every instance precludes the lumpenproletariat or, even more, the peasantry in other non-European, albeit European colonized, part capitalist, part racial colonialist societies from participating in the revolutionary democratic socialist transformation of those societies. In fact, a closer read of Marx's work reveals his own ambiguity about the revolutionary potential and participation of the peasantry in the democratic socialist transformation of society. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* he asserted: "The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. . . . In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class" (Marx and Engels, 1978, p. 608; see also Marx, 1963b, 1964c). Fanon's theory of revolutionary decolonization demonstrably deviates from Marx's theory of revolution when and where Fanon observes the ways in which racial colonialism, literally, forces the African peasantry and their lives, labor, and land "under economic conditions of existence," colonial and/or neocolonial "economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes," in particular the African bourgeoisie and the African proletariat. The African peasantry form a class, even on Marxist terms, when we consider that, no matter what the situation prior, with the abominable advent of racial colonialism they are condescendingly and crudely clumped together by the administration of the colonial societies. Even though the peasantry acknowledges each others' unique ethnicity and culture, racial colonialism has coerced them into creating a unified national consciousness and national culture. This claim also carries more credence when read in light of Fanon's contention, which will be discussed in detail below, that one of the most crucial elements of the national liberation struggle is its creation of national consciousness and providing the people with "political education."

5. My conception of the African peasantry and African proletariat have been influenced by Ekekwe (1977), Fogel (1982), P. Lloyd (1982), and Nafziger (1988). It cannot be emphasized enough that Marxists would need to first undertake systematic and critical studies of the African proletariat and African peasantry on their own terms and terrains before they, the Marxists, either force them to fit into Marx's theory of revolution or demurely disqualify them and their radical political potential and role in the revolutionary democratic socialist transformation of African colonial and neocolonial societies. What is more, Marxists would have to undertake these systematic and critical studies all the while bearing in mind something that Amilcar Cabral correctly contended: "Marx did not write about Africa." Further, I should say, Marx did not have Africa in mind when he developed his theory of revolution. Therefore Marxism, at best, provides only a partial methodological orientation with regard to Africa and Africans' pressing social and political problems, and this is



precisely why and where Fanon's thought and texts prove to go above and beyond Marx's and Marxists' analyses, that is, in light of Fanon's theory of revolutionary decolonization, among his other influential ideas (and radical political actions).

6. The classic passage from Gramsci (2000), and one that I believe ideally illuminates Fanon's "stretch[ing]" of Marxist-Leninist theory reads: "The political party, for all groups, is precisely the mechanism which carries out in civil society the same function as the state carries out, more synthetically and over a larger scale, in political society. In other words it is responsible for welding together the organic intellectuals of a given group—the dominant one—and the traditional intellectuals. The party carries out this function in strict dependence on its basic function, which is that of elaborating its own component parts—those elements of a social group which has been born and developed as an 'economic' group—and of turning them into qualified political intellectuals, leaders and organizers of all the activities and functions inherent in the organic development of an integral society, both civil and political. Indeed it can be said that within its field the political party accomplishes its function more completely and organically than the state does within its admittedly far larger field. An intellectual who joins the political party of a particular social group is merged with the organic intellectuals of the group itself, and is linked tightly with the group" (p. 310). The linking of "organic intellectuals" with "traditional intellectuals," and both groups' eventual transformation into "political intellectuals, leaders and organizers" are all notions that Fanon hints at in his theory of revolution, especially his theories of the decentralized party and its radical political education program. However, what helps to distinguish Fanon's theory of revolution from that of Gramsci's is the important—though often overlooked by many Marxists—fact that Fanon's theory of revolutionary is actually more properly conceived of as a *critical theory of revolutionary decolonization*. This makes all the difference in the world, as Fanon's critical theory points to the intersections and interconnection between capitalism and colonialism, as well as the ways in which the aforementioned are utterly inextricable from race, racism, racial violence, and white supremacy. In the following "form" of Fanonism, "Feminist Fanonism," we will also witness that integral to Fanon's conception of revolutionary decolonization is an intense emphasis on the ways in which gender is racially colonized and the dialectic of women's decolonization and women's liberation.

7. It should be noted here that where Fanon assigns a role to the lumpenproletariat, Marx described them as "a recruiting ground for thieves and criminals of all kinds, living on the crumbs of society, people without a definite trade, vagabonds, people without a hearth or a home" (Marx and Engels, 1958, vol. 1, p. 155). This means, then, according to Marx the lumpenproletariat were the dregs of society who were not in any way invested in the development of society and, consequently, had no real historical role in the revolutionary democratic socialist transformation of society. Because they were willing to sell their services to the bourgeoisie, they were deemed reactionary and not to be trusted (pp. 159–162). It is also important to note that Fanon discusses the African peasantry in much greater detail than he does the lumpenproletariat, which could mean that though he believes they could potentially make a contribution to revolutionary decolonization and democratic socialist transformation, his theory of revolution does not hinge on them, or any single social class or group of social actors and actresses for that matter.

8. "Marx was a centralist," declared Lenin (1975). "Only those who are imbued with the philistine 'superstitious belief' in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state machine for the destruction of centralism!" (p. 348). The point here is not to prove Lenin (or Marx, for that matter) wrong, which would amount to little more than hairsplitting since he was developing a theory of revolution specific, first and foremost, to Russia, but more, my real aim here is to remind my readers, yet again, that neither Marx nor Lenin developed the kind of attentive analysis or critical theory of racial colonialism and its interconnection(s) with racial capitalism to the depth and detail that Fanon did. Where Lenin was undoubtedly a strong centralist, Fanon was an extreme decentralist, and it is important to incessantly emphasize Fanon's deviations from Marxist-Leninism in order to accent the distinctive features of his radical politics and critical social theory and the fact that in many (if not, in *most*) instances Fanonism went and continues to go well-beyond Marxist-Leninism when and where we come to racism and colonialism and their interconnection(s) with capitalism.

9. Gramsci's words and wisdom, once again, provide insight into Fanon's emphasis on the ongoing radical political education of the people, in this instance all segments of society who are participating in revolutionary decolonization, not merely the proletariat. Similar to Fanon, Gramsci asserts that *all* members of the party should be "political intellectuals, leaders and organizers." Everyone should be involved in a program of radical political education: "That all members of a political party should be regarded as intellectuals is an affirmation that can easily lend itself to mockery and caricature. But if one thinks about it nothing could be more exact. There are of course distinctions of level to be made. A party might have a greater or lesser proportion of members in the higher grades or in the lower, but this is not the point. What matters is the function, which is directive and organizational, i.e., educative, i.e., intellectual" (Gramsci, 2000, p. 310). In several senses, then, for both Gramsci and Fanon the party serves not simply as a social and political tool, but also an educative and intellectual instrument through which the people raise their critical consciousness and rescue and reclaim their lives, lands, and labor.

10. There has been a long-standing tendency to overlook the myriad ways in which Negritude contributed to the evolution of black radical politics. Indeed, it is important to explore its literary components and aesthetic contributions; however, it is equally important not to diminish and downplay its social and political dimensions, especially its preoccupations with various versions of socialism and communism. On Negritude's implications for radical politics, see Berrian and Long (1967), Chikwendu (1977), Cismaru (1974), Climo (1976), English (1996), Fabre (1975), Feuser (1966), Finn (1988), Flather (1966), Gbadegesin (1991b), Hale (1974), Irele (1965a, 1965b, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1986), Jeanpierre (1961), E. A. Jones (1971), Kennedy (1968, 1988), Kennedy and Trout (1966) Kesteloot (1990, 1991), Knight (1974), Lagneau (1961), Lindfors (1970, 1980), Long (1969), Luvai (1974), Markovitz (1967, 1969), Mohome (1968), Rabaka (2009), Senghor (1998), Shelton (1964), Simon (1963), L. V. Thomas (1965), Towa (1969a, 1971), Trout and Kennedy (1968), Wake (1963), and Wanja (1974).

11. For full-scale treatments of Césaire's literary career, see Arnold (1981), G. Davies (1997), and Scharfman (1987). Hale (1974) and Pallister (1991) provide excellent analyses of both Césaire's literary and political writings, while Bailey (1992)

and Irele (1968) focus specifically on Césaire's political plays. Cismaru (1974), B. H. Edwards (2005), Jahn (1958), Kennedy (1968, 1988), Kesteloot (1995), Nesbitt (2000), Tomich (1979), and Towa (1969a, 1969b) are a few of the more noteworthy and seminal articles/essays in Césaire studies.

12. For more on Senghor and Senghorian Negritude, see Beier (1959), Berrian and Long (1967), Chikwendu (1977), Climo (1976), Finn (1988), Hyman (1971), E. A. Jones (1971), Kesteloot (1990), Lagneau (1961), Markovitz (1969), Rabaka (2009), L. V. Thomas (1965), and Towa (1971). In order to fully understand Negritude, it is important to critically engage France and French citizens' ambivalent relationship with French colonialism (nay, French imperialism) in Africa and the Caribbean. For further discussion, I refer my critical readers to endnote 8 in the previous "form" of Fanonism, "Decolonialist Fanonism," where this issue is critically engaged at length.

13. Senghor's extended treatment of "Africanity" may be found in Senghor (1971). For critiques of "Africanity," as conceived by Senghor, see Jack (1996), Melady (1971), Rabaka (2009), Serequeberhan (1998), Simon (1963), Spleth (1993), and Towa (1971).

14. On this point, Ernest Wamba-Dia-Wamba (1991), in "Philosophy in Africa: Challenges of the African Philosopher," asserted: "Either philosophy unites with the popular masses, who make the authentically national history, and is thus liberating; or it is separated from them—idealizes itself—and loses its creative foundation and thus becomes oppressive. In today's Africa, to think is increasingly to think *for* or *against* imperialism. Indifference, neutrality, and even ignorance only strengthen imperialism. Any discourse on objectivism, or cognitive non-involvement as the condition of truth and science, is nothing but an imperialist form of persuasion" (p. 244, emphasis in original). As Cabral admonishes the African masses, and Wamba-Dia-Wamba African philosophers, to define their positions either *for* or *against* imperialism, I would like—considering our contemporary condition(s)—to forward a similar suggestion to contemporary Africana (and other) critical theorists. Our work must be historically-rooted, socially relevant and responsible, and we must make every effort to relate our (concrete) philosophies and/or (critical) theories to: (1) radical political praxes that provide a foundation for and help to foster (2) revolutionary democratic socialist transformation that would ultimately lead to (3) the radical/revolutionary and rational redistribution of human and material resources.

15. I am well aware that this statement, at first glance, may appear to many as fairly "utopian." However, I say to the anti-utopianists and democratic socialist skeptics precisely what the Frankfurt School critical theorist Herbert Marcuse (1969b) did: "I will not be deterred by one of the most vicious ideologies of today, namely, the ideology which derogates, denounces and ridicules the most decisive concepts and images of a free society as merely 'utopian' and 'only' speculative. It may well be that precisely in those aspects of socialism which are today ridiculed as utopian, lies the decisive difference, the contrast between an authentic socialist society and the established societies, even the most advanced industrial societies" (p. 20). A certain amount of utopianism, therefore, has its place, but I contend that this type of thinking is most effective only after a (hopefully "critical") theorist has, in extremely accessible language, explicated "what is." That is to say that the theorist has engaged and interpreted the world, or a specific circumstance or situation, as it

actually exists, in its concreteness. A critical theorist describes and criticizes “what is,” and—perhaps herein lies the distinction of “critical” theorists and “critical” theory—projects and provides alternatives, potentialities and possibilities as to how and the ways in which we (collectively) can produce “what ought to be.” It is in this light that I agree with Marcuse (1968) when he asserted that “freedom is only possible as the realization of what today is called utopia” (p. xx; see also Marcuse, 1970a, pp. 62–82). I take Marcuse to mean that just as human beings, history, culture, and struggles are always and ever evolving, so too should our concept(s) of what it means to be free (i.e., freedom/human liberation). With the present state of technology, science, communications, etc., we have the ways and the means through which we can bring into being forms of freedom (modes of human/e existence and experience) unfathomed and unimagined by any other people in any other age or epoch. As critical theorists, it is our task, indeed, it is our solemn duty, to promote liberating, as opposed to dominating, uses of human and material resources, including science and technology, in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. For further discussion, see the fifth and final “form” of Fanonism, “Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism,” discussed in the present volume.

16. For an example of a hermeneutic approach to Fanon that positively and concretely connects his theory to praxis, all the while providing critical thought-provoking interpretations of his thought and texts for contemporary Africana studies, specifically Africana philosophy, see the awe-inspiring work of the Eritrean philosopher Tsenay Serequeberhan (1994, 2000, 2003, 2007). Serequeberhan’s influence on my conception of hermeneutics cannot be overstated.

17. For a few of the more notable Marxist, orthodox and otherwise, interpretations of Fanon, please see Ayalew (1975), Ro. Collins (1998), Forsythe (1973), W. Hansen (1997), Kipfer (2004), McCulloch (1983a), C. J. Robinson (1993), L. Turner (1991), Wallerstein (1970, 1979, 2000), and Worsley (1972).

18. On Marxist theory as “part and parcel of capitalism,” of course, see Marx and Engels (1978), but *do* look to the work of the Frankfurt School and other so-called Western Marxist. Rarely if ever do they write a single word concerning the ways in which capitalism ravages “the wretched of the earth,” that is, racially colonized peoples. This is precisely why the analyses and theories of Césaire, Senghor, and Cabral are of more relevance to our present discussion. These Africana intellectual-activists, among many others, attempted to grasp and grapple with not only capitalism, but also colonialism. Their work is, therefore, “critical theory” in the pervasive and most profound sense of the term. If the critical theory of the Frankfurt School was, as Kellner (1989) claims, developed as a critique of the crises of both capitalism and Marxism, then one of the major characteristics of Africana critical theory is that it serves as a critique of, and response to, the crises of not only capitalism and Marxism, but also colonialism and racism (see also Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2009; C. J. Robinson, 2000, 2001). This is extremely important to point out, especially considering the fact the over 75 percent of the earth’s population and surface has been, and, to a certain extent, remains racially colonized (Blaut, 1993; Said, 1979, 1993). This leads us to an extremely serious, yet simple question: Upon whose behalf were, and are, the Frankfurt School, as well as Frankfurt School–descended (especially, Habermasians), critical theorists developing their theories? For samples of the work of the Frankfurt School, see the anthologies of Arato and Gebhardt (1997), Bron-

ner and Kellner (1989), and Ingram and Simon-Ingram (1992). For commentary on Frankfurt school critical theory, consult Bernstein (1995), Bottomore (1984), Bronner (2002), Connerton (1980), Dubiel (1974), Friedman (1981), Geuss (1981), Held (1980), Ingram (1990), Jameson (1971), Jay (1996), Kellner (1984, 1989), Marcus and Tar (1984), Rasmussen (1996), Rasmussen and Swindal (2002, 2004), Slater (1977), Therborn (1996), Wellmer (1974), and Wiggerhaus (1995). On "Western Marxism," see Gottlieb (1992), Howard (1988), Jay (1984), McLellan (1979), and *New Left Review* (1978).

19. For further discussion of the "contradictions at its [Marxism's] conceptual core," see the solid critiques from the more or less neo-Marxists and post-Marxists in the seminal anthologies of Callari, Cullenberg, and Biewener (1995), Magnus and Cullenberg (1995), and C. Nelson and Grossberg (1988).

20. The discourse of African socialism is still developing, and though there is no consensus on the "correct" conception of socialism for Africa, there does seem to be general agreement on the fact that for socialism, or any political economic system, to really address the authentic human needs of Africa and Africans, it would have to be grounded in and grow out of Africa's particular history and culture, Africa's trans-ethnic conceptions of social organization, politics, ethics, and so on. For further discussion, and for some of the texts I have drawn from to develop my argument here, please see: S. Amin (1973, 1976, 1977, 1990, 1998a, 1998b, 2003, 2005), Amin and Cohen (1977), Babu (1981), Cabral (1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1979), Cohen and Goulbourne (1991), I. Cox (1966), Friedland (1964), Kimua (1986), Lopes (1988), Marable (1987), Mohiddin (1981), Munslow (1986), Nkrumah (1961, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1968a, 1968d, 1968e, 1969, 1970a, 1970b, 1973b, 1973c, 1997), Nwoko (1985), Nyerere (1966, 1968, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977), Ranuga (1996), Senghor (1959, 1961, 1962, 1964a, 1964b, 1970), T. Thomas (1974), and Toure (1959, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980).

21. In "classical" Marxist theory, socialism is to serve as a transient or transitional state (or State) between capitalism and communism. Of course, the Russian revolution of 1917 led by Lenin skipped socialism and went straight to their own "Soviet-styled" communism, which many Marxists denounced as not being an authentic communism at all. For a discussion, see Gottlieb (1992) and Kellner (1989). For a direct critique of Soviet Marxism from a major Western Marxist, see Marcuse (1958), and especially the 1985 Columbia University reprint which has an excellent introduction by Douglas Kellner that helps to situate the text in the social and political climate in which it was produced.



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## Feminist Fanonism

### The Facts of Black Radical Feminism(s) and the Lived-Experience(s) of Revolutionary Algerian Women: Fanon's Contributions to Women's Decolonization and Women's Liberation

Separatist ideology encourages us to believe that women alone can make feminist revolution—we cannot. Since men are the primary agents maintaining and supporting sexism and sexist oppression, they can only be successfully eradicated if men are compelled to assume responsibility for transforming their consciousness and the consciousness of society as a whole. After hundreds of years of anti-racist struggle, more than ever before nonwhite people are currently calling attention to the primary role white people must play in the anti-racist struggle. The same is true of the struggle to eradicate sexism—men have a primary role to play. This does not mean that they are better equipped to lead feminist movement; it does mean that they should share equally in resistance. In particular, men have a tremendous contribution to make to feminist struggle in the area of exposing, confronting, opposing, and transforming the sexism of their male peers. When men show a willingness to assume equal responsibility in feminist struggle, performing whatever tasks are necessary, women should affirm their revolutionary work by acknowledging them as comrades in struggle.

—bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (p. 81)

For black women as well as black men, it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others—for their use and to our detriment. The development of self-defined black women, ready to explore and pursue our power and interests within our communities, is a vital component in the war for black liberation. . . . For it

is through the coming together of self-actualized individuals, female and male, that any real advances can be made. The old sexual power relationships based on a dominant/subordinate model between unequals have not served us as a people, nor as individuals.

—Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (p. 46)

For revolutionary war is not a war of men. It is not a war waged with an active army and reserves. Revolutionary war, as the Algerian people is waging it, is a total war in which the woman does not merely knit for or mourn the soldier. The Algerian woman is at the heart of the combat. Arrested, tortured, raped, shot down, she testifies to the violence of the occupier and to his inhumanity. As a nurse, a liaison agent, a fighter, she bears witness to the depth and the density of the struggle. . . . The woman's place in Algerian society is indicated with such vehemence that the occupier's confusion is readily understandable. This is because Algerian society reveals itself not to be the womanless society that had been so convincingly described. Side by side with us, our sisters do their part in further breaking down the enemy system and in liquidating the old mystifications once and for all.

—Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (pp. 66–67)

Given the range of these women's political and social concerns, and their focus on agency, human freedom, and liberation, it is not at all surprising that the liberation theories of Frantz Fanon—a man obsessed with humanity and justice, a slave of the cause of people, of liberty, who at death's door, emaciated from the leukemia that had eaten away at his flesh, desired to have his body flung into the battlefields of Algeria—would find a place in the writings of radical black women of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. . . . But rather than speak of Fanon as a feminist, it is perhaps more appropriate . . . to speak of Fanon's radically humanist profeminist consciousness. This consciousness is guided by Fanon's envisioning of women's liberation from the confines of repressive patriarchal traditions, and his advocacy of women's movement from objects to subjects of history, converging most poignantly in *A Dying Colonialism*; however, it transcends, as does the bulk of his writings, the specificities of the Algerian, sub-Saharan African, and Martiniquan experiences.

—Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* (pp. 23–24)

Pure and simply, this radical theorist of third-world liberation was a hater of women.

—Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (p. 250)



Fanon has a contradictory, controversial, and regularly contested relationship with feminism, womanism, and women's studies.<sup>1</sup> As the growing body of criticism on Fanon's "feminism" demonstrates, it would be extremely difficult to deny his contributions—again, however contradictory, controversial, and contested—to women's quest to decolonize their distinct life-worlds and lived-experiences in the male supremacist world in which they find themselves (Bergner, 1995; Chow, 1999; Decker, 1990; Doane, 1991; Dubey, 1998; Faulkner, 1996; Fuss, 1995; Gopal, 2002; Mann, 2004; McClintock, 1995; Oliver, 2004; Sharpley-Whiting, 1997; Vasavithasan, 2004; Woodhull, 1990, 1993). Fanon's commitment to women's liberation was deeply connected to, and even more inextricable from, his commitments to revolutionary decolonization, democratic socialism, and human liberation, and, as with each of the aforementioned, his theory of women's liberation has progressive and retrogressive aspects. There has long been a knee-jerk tendency among theorists, both male and female, who engage Fanon's contributions to feminism, womanism, and women's liberation to argue *either* that Fanon was gender progressive *or* that Fanon was gender regressive. I openly acknowledge, at the outset and in all intellectual honesty, that Fanon was *both*: in his texts he seems to be schizophrenically, at times, a staunch advocate for women's rights and women's liberation, and, at other times, completely oblivious of his "Freudian slips" and blind-spots with regard to gender justice and the ways in which his work—that is, his own words—speak to, not the *decolonization* of women's life-worlds and lived-experiences, but the *recolonization* of women's life-worlds and lived-experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Much has been made of Fanon's brutal, but powerfully persuasive, critique of Martiniquan writer Mayotte Capécia in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Many feminist theorists find his critique of Capécia so merciless and his words so acerbic that his work seems to be rarely read beyond his first book, and this, insofar as I am concerned, is the main part of the problem. In speaking on this issue in "Who Is That Masked Woman? Or, the Role of Gender in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*," feminist theorist Gwen Bergner (1995), perhaps, put it best when she wrote: "Typically, contemporary readers dismiss Fanon's condemnation [of Mayotte Capécia] as so obviously sexist that it does not merit analysis" (p. 83). What these otherwise, I can only assume, sophisticated feminist readers fail to see is that they not only do Fanon a disservice, but they do themselves a great and grave disservice by re-inscribing Fanon's supposed "sexism" and theoretically freeze-framing him as an "antifeminist" in a way that they do not (and probably would not dare to dream of) when it comes to the oftentimes unrepentantly sexist *and* racist thought of, for example, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, or Heidegger (see Bernasconi, 2001, 2003; Carver, 1998; Di Stephano, 2008; Farrell,

2008; Hearn, 1991; Himmelweit, 1991; Holland and Huntingdon, 2001; P. J. Mills, 1996; Oliver, 1995; Oliver and Pearsall, 1998; Schott, 1997; Scott and Franklin, 2006; Ward and Lott, 2002). I am not in any way suggesting that Fanon, or any other black male thinker, be given a pass when and where we come to women's liberation, as much as I am pleading with feminists and other women's liberationists to do away with their long-standing double-standard when and where we come to nonwhite men's (and, sadly, something very similar could be said of nonwhite women's) contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation (W. Breines, 2006; Byrd and Guy-Sheftall, 2001; Caraway, 1991; Carbado, 1999; Roth, 2003; Ware, 1992; E. F. White, 2001).

### THE WICKED WAYS OF BLACK MEN FOLK: FANON, MALE FEMINISM, AND FEMALE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Fanon spent the great bulk of his life and intellectual energy wrestling with different forms of domination and discrimination, and though it is generally acknowledged that he missed the mark in terms of developing a full-fledged critical theory of women's decolonization and women's liberation, there remains much among his pro-feminist fragments that can (and, I believe, *should*) be salvaged in the interest of developing an authentic antisexist critical social theory. To leave Fanon to the conventional "anti-feminist," militaristic-masculinist "prophet of violence" interpretation (or, rather, *misinterpretation*) is, to my mind, to throw the baby out with the bath water. The more radical and critical thing to do is to search for and salvage what we can from Fanon's life-work and legacy that will aid us in our endeavors to develop an Africana critical theory of contemporary society, which includes a definite and distinctive antisexist dimension alongside its antiracism, anticolonialism, and anticapitalism. This "form" of Fanonism, "Feminist Fanonism," then, perhaps more than any of the previously engaged "forms" of Fanonism, is an effort to build on and go beyond Fanon. It is aimed at bringing his, however inchoate, antisexist social thought into critical dialogue with past and present women's liberation theorists, feminist freedom fighters, and womanist warriors.

As with any thought-system or philosophical method there are things that are positive and others that are negative in Fanon's discourse, which, of course, brings us back to the question of dialectics. A dialectical approach to Fanon enables us to simultaneously acknowledge the sexist sentiments of *Black Skin, White Masks*, while also focusing on his evolving production and promotion of antisexist positions and policies in *A Dying Colonialism*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and *Toward the African Revolution*. This approach also opens objective interpreters of Fanon to the fact that he—as is common

with many men struggling against their sexist socialization and internalization of patriarchy—may very well have had instances of unacknowledged and/or unowned sexist thought and behavior.

Were we to highlight Fanon's sexism without accenting his antisexism (or, vice versa), we would be producing and practicing the very type of "one-dimensional" interpretation and thought that critical theory purports to be combating and offering ethical and radical (if not, ultimately, revolutionary) alternatives (A. Y. Davis, 1998a, 2005b; Marcuse, 1964, 2001). Because he has long been cast as a sexist and "antifeminist," it is difficult for many Fanon scholars and critics to look at his life and work from multidimensional, critical theoretical optics. What I wish to accent here, above all else, are those aspects of Fanon's life-work that contribute to the development of Africana critical theory, which means that I am primarily concerned with those aspects of his discourse that critique domination and provide the promise of liberation, for both men *and* women, as well as whites *and* non-whites. The Fanon that I am interested in did not shy away from the forms of domination and discrimination that women experience and endure as a result of white *and* male supremacy, as well as colonialism and capitalism. The Fanon that I critically engage below, then, is neither completely sexist nor completely antisexist, but more a "man" who sometimes consciously challenged his sexist socialization and sometimes, perhaps, unconsciously embraced and practiced patriarchy. Clearly, and on revolutionary feminist and womanist principles, Fanon is to be condemned for his embrace and practice of patriarchy, but in the same breath I solemnly say that he is to be commended for challenging his sexist socialization and providing a paradigm and point of departure for men, much like myself, who desperately desire and *need* models, male-feminist and male-womanist models, to dialectically *deconstruct* patriarchal, phallocentric, misogynistic, and militaristic masculinity and *reconstruct* a new, revolutionary pro-feminist and pro-womanist masculinity, which is not only antiracist, anticapitalist, and anticolonialist, but also decidedly antisexist and unequivocally committed to women's rights, women's decolonization, and women's liberation.

Much of my analysis here utilizes the work of African American radical feminist theorist bell hooks (1996b), especially "Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History: What's Love Got to Do with It?" where she challenges feminists to transcend their traditionally "antagonistic and symbolically violent relationship" with Fanon (p. 79). According to hooks, it is important to acknowledge that Fanon generally worked from a "patriarchal standpoint," but, she strongly stresses, it is equally important to acknowledge the ways in which fragments of his work register a fractious relationship with patriarchy and, as a consequence, can contribute, not simply to male feminism, male womanism, and antisexism in a general sense, but to women's decolonization and women's liberation in specific.<sup>3</sup> In an intense

intellectual autobiographical moment, hooks revealingly writes about how Fanon directly contributed to her intellectual and political maturation:

It was the practice of being a resisting reader that enabled me to hear in Fanon's theories of decolonization, paradigms I could use constructively in order to liberate myself. In my late teens, my struggle for liberation did not begin with imperialism, the nation or even white supremacy, despite the situation of racial apartheid in which we lived. It began with the body of the father. Nowadays I am often asked to chart a critical pedagogy of my intellectual development. In the years before I became deeply engaged with the feminist movement and with the writing of feminist theorists, all the progressive critical thinkers who nurtured my emergent radical subjectivity were men: Fanon, Memmi, Cabral, Freire, Malcolm X. These men taught me to think critically about colonialism. They were my intellectual parents. In rooms in which it seemed no women were allowed to enter, they gave me ways to invent and make myself. (p. 81)

In "liberat[ing]," "invent[ing]," and "mak[ing]" herself, hooks came to her own unique revolutionary feminist consciousness that dialectically *critiqued* the patriarchal perspectives, and *appreciated* the antiracist and anti-imperialist elements of Fanon, Memmi, Cabral, Freire, and Malcolm X's thought. As she matured in her feminist consciousness, she developed intellectual and political relationships, with "female ancestors and feminist comrades in struggle," and in her efforts to deepen and further develop these radical feminist relationships hooks writes that she "needed to forget: to repress the father's words and be born again in the memory of the mother. This was an act of finding and listening to the female voice; mine, those of my female ancestors and feminist comrades in struggle" (p. 81). In "finding and listening to the female voice," hooks writes: "Suddenly all the knowledge I had gained from reading texts written by men in dialogue with other men were too confining. They lacked a liberatory standpoint that I found in feminism's exploration of ideas. Feminist thinking demanded that I move beyond patriarchy, beyond the body of the father" (p. 81).

Here we witness one of the major limitations, according to hooks and other feminists, of Fanon's thought: its ability to raise consciousness and inspire self-transformation, but its inability to really and truly translate self-transformation into authentic social transformation, not simply for men but for women as well, which ultimately means an antiracist, antisexist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist revolution. For many feminists, Fanon's conceptions of decolonization and revolution fails to explicitly include the eradication of patriarchy and, therefore, falls short of being a "real" revolution, an authentic project of human—as opposed to merely male—liberation. However, here there is room to call into question which texts by Fanon hooks, among other feminists, bases her feminist criticisms of Fanon on. Were one to carefully and critically comb through her essay on Fanon,

then, one would discover that hooks, as with the work of most feminists who critique Fanon's "sexism," limits her critique of Fanon to his two most famous (if not, infamous) texts: *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. Had hooks have turned to *Toward the African Revolution* and, most especially, *A Dying Colonialism*, her critique of Fanon's failure to contribute to feminist theory and women's liberation might be very different, if not nonexistent. In fact, hooks's interpretation could arguably be considered a misinterpretation when read in light of "Algeria Unveiled" and "The Algerian Family" from *A Dying Colonialism*. When these book chapters are juxtaposed with hooks's charge that Fanon commits "symbolic matricide" in his work, it seems not only unfair to Fanon and the many feminists who are drawn to the—however mangled—male feminism and male womanism in his work, but, even more, a clear case of intellectual disingenuousness. For instance, in the following passage, hooks explains why she "left Fanon behind":

During this process of conversion to feminist politics I often forgot my patriarchal intellectual parents. For a long time I left Fanon behind. The memory of how his work had transformed me was deeply submerged. Although I spoke proudly and affectionately of the ways works by Malcolm X, Memmi, Freire and Cabral inspired me in my books, there was little mention of Fanon. In retrospect I see in his work a profound lack of recognition of the presence of the mothering body, of the female body that thinks. It is the symbolic matricide enacted in his work that necessarily severed the connection the moment I embarked on a critical journey with feminism that began with the recovery of the mother's body. (p. 81)

Not to sound too Freudian, it could be said that hooks cut her intellectual umbilical cord with Fanon, severing a connection, a source that she had suckled at to sustain herself and, even more, to radically bring herself into being, to create her own unique and unequivocally feminist critical consciousness. Undoubtedly hooks has long been a consistently brilliant theorist, one whom I count as one of my select few living teachers and guides, but, truth be told, here is one of the few places where hooks and I disagree. Because, here she fails to see that the Fanon that she is leaving behind is the Fanon of *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, and *not* the full Fanon—that is, Fanon in light of his entire intellectual history-making and critical consciousness-raising corpus. Had this distinction have been made, then I would have—on my own heartfelt male feminist and male womanist principles—gone along with hooks's interpretation. However, here my conscience compels me to take issue with one of my most beloved mentors. I find it curious that hooks, a critical theorist internationally renowned for her awe-inspiring acumen, did not question why, out of Fanon's four volumes, *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched*

of the Earth are so popular? Why is it perfectly acceptable for theorists and scholars of every political persuasion to claim that they critically engaged Fanon, when in all intellectual actuality they have only critically engaged half of Fanon, leaving the other half of Fanon, the more feminist-friendly half, if you will, in the lurch? For many of us who have taken the time and intellectual energy to critically engage the other half of Fanon (i.e., *A Dying Colonialism* and *Toward the African Revolution*), we discovered a completely different Fanon, almost wholly new dimensions of Fanon: a Fanon deeply committed to women's liberation; a Fanon fascinated and infuriated by the uses and abuses of radio, television, and other media; and, a Fanon preoccupied not only with Algeria, but with "This Africa to Come," as he stated in *Toward the African Revolution*, a united Africa free from all forms of imperialism, especially neocolonialism.

I raise the issue of feminist misinterpretations of Fanon, not to defend or apologize for Fanon's *textual masculinism*, which I find morally repugnant, but to humbly make a critical distinction between masculinism and sexism, and gender progressivism and antifeminism. Fanon, for the most part was, indeed, a masculinist, but I believe the feminists go too far in making blanket condemnations and charging him and his corpus with "symbolic matricide" and antifeminism. This kind of one-dimensional interpretation of an extremely multidimensional figure such as Fanon does not simply diminish or neglect what some have called "Fanon's feminism," but it actually negates, erases or, at the very least, renders invisible his contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation. In *Transcending the Talented Tenth*, the African American radical feminist philosopher Joy James (1997) importantly asserts that masculinism is different from misogynism and antifeminism:

Since masculinism does not explicitly advocate male superiority or rigid gender social roles, it is not identical to patriarchal ideology. Masculinism can share patriarchy's presupposition of the male as normative without its anti-female politics and rhetoric. Men who support feminist politics, as pro-feminists, may advocate the equality or even superiority of women. . . . However, even without patriarchal intent, certain works replicate conventional gender roles. (p. 36)

The fault lies, therefore, not so much with the feminists, but more so with the masculinists, these men who are theoretically not patriarchs and antifeminists, but who do not critically comprehend that their masculinist worldview, though not identical to the patriarchal and misogynistic worldviews, nonetheless diminishes their gender progressivism, rendering their well-meaning thought and actions on behalf of women's decolonization and women's liberation, at best, paternalistic and schizophrenic and, at worst, ultimately, a deeply disguised, clandestine contribution to women's recolonization and women's continued domination. This, again, speaks to

the necessity of bringing the dialectic to bear on male feminism and male womanism, and strongly stressing the need for antisexist men to consciously and consistently practice sincere self-criticism and self-correction. Antisexist men must do more than theoretically commit themselves to women's decolonization and women's liberation, much more—they must develop dialectical rapports and critical theoretical relationships with the critical theories of women's decolonization and women's liberation and embrace and practice feminism and/or womanism; hence, epistemically and politically incorporating women's liberation theory into their worldviews, thoughts, and practices. Without developing dialectical rapports and critical theoretical relationships with women's liberation theory and praxis, well-meaning antisexist men's worldviews, and, therefore, their thoughts and actions, remain nothing other than a *well-meaning masculinism*, which in no uncertain terms perpetuates and exacerbates patriarchy and the continued colonization of women's life-worlds and lived-experiences. James's words and wisdom, once again, find their way into the fray:

Like some types of anti-racism, certain forms of feminism and pro-feminism are disingenuous. Consider that anti-racist stances guided by a Eurocentrism that presents European (American) culture as normative inadvertently reproduce white dominance; this re-inscription of white privilege occurs despite the avowed racial egalitarianism. Likewise, despite their gender progressivism, anti-sexists or pro-feminists whose politics unfolds within a meta-paradigm that establishes the male as normative reinforce male dominance. (p. 35)

By making a critical distinction between masculinism and misogyny, we are able to simultaneously and dialectically acknowledge that Fanon was for the most part a masculinist with pro-feminist fragments scattered throughout his corpus, and that it is extremely intellectually disingenuous to interpret (or, rather, misinterpret) him and his oeuvre as misogynist or antifeminist. In taking a dialectical and critical theoretical approach to Fanon, we are given license to unflinchingly conduct an intellectual archaeology of his contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation, with the critical understanding that many first-rate feminist theorists may have fallen into their own form(s) of *feminist bad faith*, whether consciously or unconsciously, by denying Fanon's contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation. In *Feminism Is for Everybody*, bell hooks (2000b) writes about an antimale faction within the feminist movement who resent "the presence of antisexist men because their presence serve[s] to counter any insistence that all men are oppressors, or that all men hate women" (p. 68). Revolutionary feminists, such as hooks, challenge reactionary antimale feminists who project nice, "neat categories of oppressor/oppressed" onto men and women in their efforts to portray "all men as the enemy in order to represent all women as victims" (p. 68).

Revolutionary feminists counter by arguing that “from the onset of the movement there was a small group of men who recognized that feminist movement was as valid a movement for social justice as any and all other radical movements in our nation’s history that men had supported. These men became our comrades in our struggle and our allies” (p. 68).<sup>4</sup>

Instead of approaching Fanon as a simple sexist, I will critically engage the pro-feminist fragments scattered throughout his texts. Following in the insurgent intellectual and radical political footsteps of revolutionary feminists, such as bell hooks (2004a, 2004b) and Joy James (1997, 1999), who explicitly advocate a critical openness to male feminists and male womanists, below I explore “Fanon’s feminism” or, rather, “Feminist Fanonism,” as a paradigmatic point of departure for the critique of both masculinism and misogyny, as well as antimale feminists’ gender bias against male feminists, male womanists, and their contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation. My major preoccupation here is premised on Tracy Sharpley-Whiting’s (1997) assertion in her watershed work, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*, that:

Fanon is . . . neither silent on the question of gender, which exists as part of feminists’ conflicts, nor sexually indifferent. I would argue that his use of masculinist paradigms of oppression and alienation in *Black Skin, White Masks* (or elsewhere) does not importantly posit male superiority. Masculinism is categorically different from antifeminism and misogyny. . . . [A] thorough reading of Fanon’s writings on women, liberation, and resistance in *A Dying Colonialism*, *Toward the African Revolution*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and *Black Skin, White Masks* provides an important frame of reference for a liberatory feminist theory and praxis for women existing under various guises of colonial and neocolonial oppression and sexist domination within their own countries and communities. (pp. 9–11)

Fanon, then, indeed *does* make distinct contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation, and the issue I wish to humbly highlight here is whether or not we, that is, female *and* male women’s liberationists of the twenty-first century, are willing and able to epistemically open ourselves to his—however fragmented and foible-filled—contributions, even though they are often couched in masculinist (and sometimes seemingly sexist) language and, also, in spite of the fact that Fanon’s pro-feminism and gender progressivism, in many instances, may be (and most likely is) very different from our own. What lessons can we learn from Fanon’s contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation? How can his work help men (and may be even some women) “unlearn sexism” and learn to embrace and practice antisexism, whether through radical/revolutionary feminism or womanism, or both? What does it say about the state of the women’s liberation movement if sincere and authentic antisex-



ist and gender progressive men feel that from many feminists' points of view they are "damned if they do, and damned if they don't," and upon admission of their disdain for, and disavowal of their sexist socialization and patriarchy they are quickly quarantined to a purgatory for former patriarchs by the very feminists and womanists they were sincerely seeking camaraderie with?

Again, bell hooks (1984) put the premium on revolutionary feminist principles in *Feminist Theory* when she sternly stated, "men should assume responsibility for actively struggling to end sexist oppression" (p. 67). Some feminists and womanists have argued that Fanon, in his own unique way, was grappling with gender domination and discrimination and, even more specifically, women's decolonization and women's liberation. He is not to be applauded for devoting a book chapter or two to women's life-worlds and life-struggles, because—in all insurgent intellectual and radical political honesty, and hoping not to sound too harsh—anything that men do to "end sexist oppression" is simply what any "real" revolutionary is morally responsible for, and ethically obligated to do to bring a "real" (as opposed to a masculinist) revolution into being. I am not asking, therefore, for a special place or any special favors for male feminists and male womanists in the women's liberation movement, as much as I am humbly pleading with women's liberationists to critically engage the precarious and perplexing position of many pro-feminist and pro-womanist men who feel that they have been quarantined to the "damned if you do, and damned if you don't" purgatory for former patriarchs by feminists and womanists, and routinely ridiculed and rendered socially and politically "impotent" (pun intended) in the phallocentric and male supremacist world by antifeminist and anti-womanist men. This means, then, that many, if not most, male feminists and male womanists exist, literally, in a "no-man's land," where they receive the cold shoulder from feminists and womanists, and are shamelessly shunned by male antifeminists and antiwomanists and the supersexist men who rule the male supremacist world. Speaking directly to this issue with her characteristic special insight and astuteness, hooks observes: "Men who have dared to be honest about sexism and sexist oppression, who have chosen to assume responsibility for opposing and resisting it, often find themselves isolated. Their politics are disdained by antifeminist men and women, and are often ignored by women active in feminist movement" (p. 67).

It would be a great intellectual injustice for feminists and womanists, female and male, to leave Fanon's contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation in the lurch. I reiterate, he probably was not a "feminist" or a "womanist" by past or present standards, but, from my understanding, especially with regard to revolutionary feminism, this is all beside the point. The point is to rescue and reconstruct anything that we

can from Fanon's critical intellectual and radical political legacy that will aid us in our contemporary quest(s) to deepen and further develop revolutionary feminism, "end sexist oppression," and bring a post-patriarchal world in being. What, pray tell, you perhaps have been incessantly asking, are Fanon's contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation?

### **BLACK RADICAL FEMINISTS' SKINS, WHITE MALE SUPREMACISTS' MASKS: FANON'S GENDER ANALYSIS IN *BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASKS***

In many feminist circles, *Black Skin, White Masks* has long been held up as proof positive of Fanon's "misogyny." First, leading the charge is a literary criticism: Fanon's normative use of masculinist language, such as "man," "men," "mankind," "the black man," "the man of color," and "colored brothers," combined with cold and calculated masculinist constructions and projections of gender and sexuality, culminated into an unforgivable erasure of women's, especially black women's, agency and subjectivity (Bergner, 1995; Chow, 1999; Fuss, 1995). The second mark of Fanon's "misogyny" is said to be his masculinist-reductionist approach to women, psychosexuality, and sexual violence in the text and, consequently, it is argued that he rudely reduced and rendered women, and white women in particular, neurotics and, ultimately, argued that their sexuality, their preferred sexual experiences and deep-seated sexual desires, are basically, and often unalterably, masochistic (Doane, 1991; Fuss, 1995; McClintock, 1995; Oliver, 2004). Finally, and by far the most common and condemning example of Fanon's "misogyny" is his merciless critique of Mayotte Capecia, which for many feminists demonstrates once and for all that Fanon was simply just another sexist man parading his patriarchy and sometimes subtle sexism at the expense of black women, unwittingly illustrating his deep-seated desire to colonize (or, rather, recolonize) and control black women's life-worlds and lived-experiences, as well as their bodies, sexuality, and dreams in particular (Chow, 1999; Makward, 1999; Sharpley-Whiting, 1996, 1999a).

With regard to the first charge of misogyny leveled against Fanon, his normative use of masculinist language, it must be duly conceded. Fanon's feminist critics are correct on this point. Indeed, masculinist language is prevalent throughout his oeuvre. However, astute interpreters of Fanon should turn to the first chapter of his first book, "The Negro and Language" in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he wrote, "I ascribe a basic importance to the phenomenon of language. That is why I find it necessary to begin with this subject, which should provide us with one of the elements in

the colored man's comprehension of the dimension of *the other*. For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (p. 17, emphasis in original). Here, by "the colored man," Fanon clearly means "colored people," and his use of "man" for "people," however much we may disagree with it today, was characteristic of, and consistent with its use in scholarly discourse—including feminist discourse—during his epoch, especially in the Francophone (not to mention Francophone African and Caribbean) world(s) of the 1950s (Carriere, 2002; Dunwoodie, 1998, 2005; Fisher and Schehr, 1997; Gallagher, 2002; Ibnlfassi and Hitchcott, 1996; D. Kelly, 2005; Suk, 2001). In contemporary scholarly writing if male theorists wish to denote "people," then, they are admonished to use transgender, gender-neutral, and/or women-inclusive language, such as "people," "persons," and "humankind." However, if male theorists really and truly mean "man," "men," or the males of the human species, which is to say "mankind," then, it is suggested that they use gender-specific masculinist language. Again, this was not the case when Fanon was writing, and I admit this even though I know that it should not have ever been the case, but, I must come to the painful conclusion, it was.

It is possible that Fanon, as a racially colonized person, used the only language he knew, the French of his French racial colonizers, by the very linguistic rules in which he was taught to use *their* racial colonial language.<sup>5</sup> It is quite possible that this issue, Fanon's use of masculinist language, is much more complex and complicated than many of his feminist critics have previously been willing to admit, and it is, also, quite possible that some feminists, both white and nonwhite, may have internalized anti-*black male* racism even as they initiated and/or currently continue to raise their own and others' consciousness about the centrality and significance of sexism, patriarchy, women's decolonization, and women's liberation (Byrd and Guy-Sheftall, 2001; Carbado, 1999; Farrell, 2008). We have to wonder whether there is a double-standard at work when feminists criticize Fanon, a racially colonized black man in the process of revolutionary decolonization, for his use of masculinist language, but seem to give Hegel, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Lacan, and Foucault a pass on their use of masculinist language. Many feminists seem to provide these white philosophical fathers with linguistic license because, after all, they are canonical figures, approved, validated, and legitimated by the very patriarchal philosophers, psychologists, and scientists that the feminists claim to be so fiercely fighting against. Feminists seem to be able to theoretically salvage something from these often blatantly sexist and racist figures, so why is it so difficult to dialectically do the same when it comes to radical or, rather, revolutionary antiracist, anticapitalist, and anticolonialist black male intellectual-activists, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, C. L. R. James, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, and Amilcar Cabral?

In some ways it could be said that Fanon offered up his own rationale—as opposed to “his own *defense*,” since sexist language, past or present, is unethical and, therefore, indefensible—in terms of his use of masculinist language when he touched on the fact that the racially colonized use language very differently than the racial colonizer, and that mastery of the language and culture of the racial colonizer is not simply a path to uninhibited and eager assimilation on the part of the racially colonized, but a means through which tensions and ruptures in the racially colonized/racial colonizer relationship are realized and, very often, rejected and resisted. In his own words:

To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization. . . . The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language. . . . A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language. What we are getting at becomes plain: Mastery of language affords remarkable power. (pp. 17–18)<sup>6</sup>

By constantly reminding the racially colonized that they, males and females, are powerless within the racial colonial world, the racial colonizer inadvertently aids in fostering in the racially colonized their own distinct and dogged preoccupation with “power,” with gaining and maintaining “power,” *by any means necessary*. However, often the racially colonized does not realize that the “remarkable power” they are pursuing is the racial colonizers’ conception of “power,” and, consequently, the racial colonizers’ “power,” which is not only a colonialist conception of “power,” but a racist, sexist, *and* capitalist conception of “power.” At this point the racially colonized has been so thoroughly racialized and colonized that they are not conscious of their internalization of and participation in “colonial desire” (Holden and Ruppel, 2003; Krishnaswamy, 1998; Dissanyake, 1993; R. J. Young, 1995, 1999, 2003). For Fanon, the colonized had been “duped.” Yes, indeed. But, what the colonizers’ failed to realize is that colonialism—as with racism, sexism, and capitalism—is a double-edged sword that dupes the dupe. In other words, it almost inherently and automatically deceives the initial deceiver; symbolically and concretely presenting a subtle subterfuge to the creator, or the collective creators, of the inceptive deception. “Before going any farther,” fumed Fanon (1967) in *Black Skin, White Masks*, “I find it necessary to say certain things. I am speaking here, on the one hand, of alienated (duped) blacks, and, on the other, of no less alienated (duping and duped) whites” (p. 29).

Whiteness and maleness are combined in racially colonized people’s minds, just as, as quiet as it is kept, they are collapsed and combined in ra-

cially colonizing people's—that is, racial colonial male and female—minds. The colonial world is not simply a correlate of the capitalist world but, even more, it is a white supremacist and male supremacist world, and what many of Fanon's feminist critics (as opposed to "feminist Fanonists") seem to overlook is that no matter how central and significant they believe gender and women's oppression to be (which I, of course, earnestly agree), racism, colonialism, and capitalism have a similar centrality and significance, and they have similarly been intensely internalized by both the racially colonized and the racial colonizer. That is why Fanon strongly stressed that the racially colonized does not want to be human as much as they want to be white—hence, their unerring mastery of white language and culture. However, in mastering white language and culture, the racially colonized, both male and female, also master and internalize white supremacist colonialist-capitalist patriarchy. Whether we like it or not, and whether we academically agree or disagree, in essence, in hard and fast historical *and* herstorical fact, this is what the racially colonized, the "alienated" and the "duped," are determined to master, not simply the racist, but the sexist, capitalist, and colonialist views and values of Europe, of white "civilization" and culture. Fanon revealingly wrote:

Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (p. 18)

At the outset of *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon shared with his readers, in all intellectual honesty, that his work was simultaneously a clinical study and a psycho-existential-experimental narrative: "This book is a clinical study. Those who recognize themselves in it, I think, will have made a step forward. . . . Before beginning the case, I have to say certain things. The analysis that I am undertaking is psychological. . . . The architecture of this work is rooted in the temporal" (pp. 10, 12). *Black Skin, White Masks* was, therefore, the beginning of his critical exploration and proactive process(es) of radical "disalienation" and revolutionary decolonization. He was still in the process of developing his "weapons of theory," critical theoretical arsenal, and critical language, and, sad to say, many extremely important issues that he raised, not simply in *Black Skin, White Masks* but throughout his oeuvre, went and remained either undeveloped or underdeveloped at the time of his untimely death.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, his inchoate ideas on women's decolonization and women's liberation were either undeveloped or underdeveloped, but,

yet and still, these pro-feminist fragments, if pieced together properly and fused with more fully developed revolutionary feminist and womanist theory, may nevertheless provide an important paradigm, point of departure, and antisexist alternative to phallogentric, patriarchal, misogynistic, and militaristic masculinity; an alternative masculinity distinctly different from those historically and currently available to male feminists and male womanists, as well as radical and revolutionary feminists and womanist theorists and activists.

Again, I have to ask: Is Fanon at fault for his use of masculinist language anymore than those female theorists who, writing during the same era, not only used male normative language, but put their intense internalization of male supremacy on display by either rendering sexism and patriarchy nonexistent or invisible in their thought and texts, or openly (and often vehemently) criticizing feminism and womanism and carefully composing unambiguously antifeminist and antiwomanist theories and texts? Many feminists give these female theorists a "pass," one which seems to smack of gender bias, or antimale feminism, or *feminist sexism*, especially when and where Fanon's texts demonstrate that he did, indeed, grapple with and seek to critically grasp gender oppression, women's exploitation, and sexual violence against women. He may not have engaged these issues from an orthodox feminist standpoint or employed the freshest and flyest feminist theory, but that is all beside the point that I am making here, and that is that if and when Fanon's corpus is reread and reinterpreted from revolutionary feminist and womanist perspectives, it is discovered to make several seminal and significant contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation, not to mention male feminism and male womanism. I am, in all earnestness, not convinced that Fanon's use of masculinist language translates into misogyny. Nor am I adequately persuaded that his use of masculinist language immediately and automatically disqualifies his undeniable contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation.

Were more of Fanon's feminist critics to epistemically open themselves to his—however unorthodox and imperfect—contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation, then, they might be able to salvage something from his work by critically rereading and reinterpreting his texts from dialectical and revolutionary feminist perspectives that would enable them to simultaneously critique *and* appreciate both his gender-exclusive (masculinist) and gender-inclusive (revolutionary humanist) donations to women's decolonization and women's liberation. It is, in truth, important to point out that Fanon used masculinist language, which I concede. However, it is wholly another issue to deduce from his use of masculinist language that he was either silent on gender issues, and women's life-worlds and lived-experiences in particular, or, even worse, that he was somehow a sexist or fatally antifeminist.

Fanon, indeed, did theorize gender and women's life-worlds and lived-experiences in *Black Skin, White Masks* in the chapters, "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman." Although, it must be solemnly said, many feminists do not agree with, or have serious issues with his analysis of women's life-worlds and lived-experiences. Even so, there is a big difference between arguing that Fanon was silent on women's life-worlds and lived-experiences and disagreeing with his actually existing gender analysis on feminist or womanist principles—and, it should be observed, that just because one group of feminists disagree with Fanon's analysis of women's life-worlds and life-struggles does not automatically mean that all feminists or womanists have to or will disagree with his analysis. This speaks to the myriad ways in which feminists and womanists interpret and reinterpret thought and texts. Tracy Sharpley-Whiting (1997) asserts that there is no single, unified form of *feminism*, not *one* form of feminism, but several *forms* of *feminisms*, which is, of course, keeping in line with Fanon's (1967) thought when he correctly contended that, "Negro experience is not a whole, for there is not merely *one* Negro, there are *Negroes*" (p. 136, all emphasis in original). Here we can also see the distinct differences between revolutionary feminism and more liberal and conservative forms of feminism: the revolutionary feminists, the feminists with "real" revolutionary principles, are willing and able to draw from both female *and* male radical and revolutionary sources and incorporate them into their ever-evolving vision(s) of a liberated future, which includes antisexist men in the process of creating a postpatriarchal masculinity predicated on revolutionary humanist (which always and ever includes revolutionary feminist) principles; where the liberal and conservative feminists lamely limit their conceptions of the women's liberation movement to "women only" and surreptitiously continue to reinscribe patriarchal gender relations by consciously and unconsciously embracing and perpetuating the very antagonistic sexist sex roles, women-as-victims stereotypes, femme fatale fantasies, damsels in distress daydreams, and male supremacist myths that they have long purported to be feminist freedom fighting against. In *Feminist Theory*, bell hooks (1984), critically captured this conundrum best when she wrote:

Individuals committed to feminist revolution must address ways that men can unlearn sexism. Women were never encouraged in contemporary feminist movement to point out to men their responsibility. Some feminist rhetoric "put down" women who related to men at all. Most women's liberationists were saying "women have nurtured, helped, and supported others for too long—now we must fend for ourselves." Having helped and supported men for centuries by acting in complicity with sexism, women were suddenly encouraged to withdraw their support when it came to the issue of "liberation." The insistence on a concentrated focus on individualism, on the primacy of self, deemed "liberatory"

by women's liberationists, was not a visionary, radical concept of freedom. It did provide individual solutions for women, however. It was the same idea of independence perpetuated by the imperial patriarchal state which equates independence with narcissism and lack of concern with triumph over others. In this way, women active in feminist movement were simply inverting the dominant ideology of the culture—they were not attacking it. They were not presenting practical alternatives to the status quo. In fact, even the statement "men are the enemy" was basically an inversion of the male supremacist doctrine that "women are the enemy"—the old Adam and Eve version of reality. (p. 76)

When the chapters "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman" in *Black Skin, White Masks* are carefully and critically read from revolutionary feminist and womanist perspectives, which means from epistemically open optics that eschew both weak-minded masculinists *and* backward-thinking bourgeois feminists' theoretical nepotism and intellectual insularity, then it is revealed that Fanon does not always and in every instance conceive of "the colonized," the anticolonial agents of decolonization, or "the revolutionary" as male or masculine, nor is the "neurotic Negrophobe" incessantly envisioned as female or feminine. Critically applying a revolutionary feminist and womanist hermeneutics to "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman" exposes us to the fact that Fanon actually diagnosed both racially colonized men and women and racial colonizing men and women as neurotics suffering from *Negrophobia*, *blackaphobia*, and *Afrophobia* and, as is customary in scholarly discourse, he often quarantined his studies to specific "case studies" or significant examples to drive his psycho-existential points home to his readers, who he anticipated would not all be black, male, or racially colonized.<sup>8</sup> With regard to racially colonized subjects, both male and female, his analysis actually eventually comes to similar conclusions: The colonized woman of color seeks to reclaim her long-denied humanity, human worth, and human dignity by averting, at all costs, her blackness and, above all, "falling back into the pit of Niggerhood." In fact, what she "must have is whiteness at any price." Fanon (1967) put it this way: "It is always essential to avoid falling back into the pit of Niggerhood, and every woman in the Antilles, whether in a casual flirtation or in a serious affair, is determined to select the least black of men," and the ultimate "least black of men" is, of course, the white man (pp. 47, 49). Fanon identified the two types of colonized women of color to which he is referring: "the Negress and the mulatto." Then, he proceeded to diagnose their situations in relation to the race, gender, and class rulers of the white and male supremacist capitalist-colonialist world: "The first [the Negress] has only one possibility and one concern: to turn white. The second [the mulatto] wants not only to turn white but also to avoid slipping back" into blackness and "Niggerhood" (p. 54). Therefore, the woman



of color obstinately works to whiten herself, through what Fanon called "a kind of lactification," by obtaining white male love, the love of a white man and the white male world (p. 47).

Fanon described and criticized the colonized man of color's situation with the white woman in arguably harsher psychosexual depth and detail, declaring: "Out of the blackest part of my soul, across the zebra striping of my mind, surges this desire to be suddenly *white*" (p. 63, emphasis in original). So, even at the outset of his analysis of the colonized man of color in relation to the white woman we witness an almost identical diagnosis compared to the one he delivered to the colonized woman of color in relation to the white man: the colonized woman of color wishes to "turn white," where the colonized man of color deeply desires "to be suddenly *white*." However, Fanon went even further in his analysis of the colonized man of color in relation to the white woman by exposing his anguished inner monologue and intimate psychosexual details. Notice that the colonized man of color wants to be "loved" by a white woman, *not* because of the inherent value of *her* "love," but because he believes her "love" will enable him to be "loved like a white man." Sick and twisted? Yes, indeed. In no way wishing to invoke a *discourse of comparative suffering*—where sufferers sit around angrily arguing over who is *the most* oppressed and, therefore, they are distracted from the ongoing struggle to end their oppression—it could be sincerely said that Fanon's diagnosis of the colonized man of color in relation to the white woman is devastatingly damning, in that the colonized man of color does not simply seek the white woman's "love" but, if we really and truly read between the lines, he sickly seeks white male love, the love of white men, and their white male supremacist capitalist-colonialist world. Here is the colonized man of color's anguished inner monologue in his irrational quest to be "loved" by a white woman in order to be "loved" "like a white man," penultimately, "loved" by white men, and, ultimately, to *become* and *be* a white man:

I wish to be acknowledged not as *black* but as *white*. Now—and this is a form of recognition that Hegel had not envisaged—who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man. Her love takes me onto the noble road that leads to total realization. . . . I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine. (p. 63, all emphasis in original)

What we witness in "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman" in *Black Skin, White Masks* is precisely what Fanon meant when he stated: "White civilization and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro," which, when he

writes here of "the Negro," he meant both black men *and* black women (p. 14). However, here we also witness "an existential deviation" on the part of "alienated (duping and duped) whites" as well. In fact, these two chapters on interracial colonial desire are not free-standing, critical inquiries into independent issues, but actually critical inquiries into extremely inter-related and inextricable issues revolving around the racial or, rather, the racist nature of whites' colonization of nonwhites, and the ways in which the incessant internalization of racial colonialism deforms and destroys the personalities and relationships of both colonized nonwhites and colonizing whites. Fanon's feminist critics fail to see that he did not simply address racism and colonialism in these chapters, but gender, gender identity, and sexuality as well. Far from neglecting gender, and women's life-worlds and lived-experiences in specific, Fanon's analyses in these chapters form a unified Africana existential phenomenology of racial, gender, and sexual pathology under the auspices of white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism. Instead of leaving women's life-worlds and lived-experiences in the lurch, Fanon incorporated them into his analysis, and, as with any truly "critical" theorist, he was intellectually audacious and not afraid to take risks. Therefore, sometimes his theories hit the mark and, at other times, they sorely missed the mark.

Many of Fanon's feminist critics feel that he really missed the mark when we come to his critique of Mayotte Capécia. His merciless critique, however, was not a critique of Capécia as much as it was a critique of her self-negation, her neurotic Negrophobia, and *blackmalephobia* in particular (Armour, 1997; Bauerlein, 2001; D. James, 1992). In "The Woman of Color and the White Man," Fanon stated: "Today I believe in the possibility of love; that is why I endeavor to trace its imperfections, its perversions" (p. 42). He, therefore, was critiquing the ways in which "love," especially interracial "love," becomes a "perversion" in a white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, because "true, authentic love—wishing for others what one postulates for oneself, when that postulation unites the permanent values of human reality—" it "entails the mobilization of psychic drives basically freed of unconscious conflicts" (p. 41). It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any serious social scientist to argue that interracial "love," and specifically "love" between blacks and whites, is "freed of unconscious conflicts" when *Black Skin, White Masks* direly demonstrated that whites are "sealed" in their whiteness and blacks in their "blackness," and that "white civilization and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro" and, consequently, "created a massive psychoexistential complex" (pp. 12, 14).

In Capécia's autobiographical *Je suis martiniquaise*, she and her would-be white male suitor, Andre, are "sealed" in the very social constructions of blackness and whiteness, of inferiority and superiority that were discussed

above. They do not have a "true, authentic love . . . freed of unconscious conflicts" because their "love" and their "love-life" are situated in a white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, a world where Capecia is devoid of value owing to the fact that it is an antiblack and antiwoman world, while Andre is *overvalued* in such a world in view of the fact that it is a white and male supremacist world. In keeping with his stated task "to trace [the] imperfections, [the] perversions" of love, Fanon was not critical of Capecia's interracial relationship simply because it was an interracial relationship, nor was his critique connected to his supposedly deep-seated desire to "circumscribe black women's sexuality and economic autonomy in order to ensure the patriarchal authority of black men," as Gwen Bergner (1995) argued, but instead his critique was actually aimed at Capecia's interracial relationship because her articulation of her desires illustrated her intense internalization of the worldview and values of the antiblack racist, antiwoman, white supremacist and male supremacist world in which her interracial relationship was situated. Fanon's critique was directed toward the ways in which the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world impedes and impairs "true, authentic love . . . freed of unconscious conflicts." As with the racially colonized man of color who psychotically seeks the white woman's "love" in order to be "loved" "like a white man," penultimately, "loved" by white men, and, ultimately, to *become* and *be* a white man, so, too, it is white male love that Capecia seeks in her neurotic Negrophobic quest to negate her blackness and femaleness.

It should be critically observed here that Fanon's diagnosis is specific to Mayotte Capecia and "the Mayotte Capecias of all nations," and should not be generalized to include all women of color or nonwhite women, and certainly not all black women (p. 44). Fanon did not have a pathological approach to women but, as a matter of fact, sought to free racially colonized and racial colonizing women and men from the conscious and "unconscious conflicts," which is to say, the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist views and values, thoughts, and behaviors tearing their tortured souls asunder. In fact, he counseled his readers *not* to extend his analysis of Mayotte Capecia to all black women in relationships with white men, stating, "there was a touch of fraud in trying to deduce from the behavior of Nini and Mayotte Capecia a general law of the behavior of the black woman with the white man" (p. 81). It seems that some of Fanon's feminist critics missed this most important passage and took his critique as a blanket critique and condemnation of all women of color involved in relationships with white men. This specific group of Fanon's feminist critics have been, and remain, wrong, and his riposte to their intellectual disingenuousness is directly above for all the world to grasp and grapple with.

Whether Fanon's feminist critics wish to acknowledge it or not, there *are* extremely gendered differences and "existential deviations" involved

in racially colonized nonwhite people's (especially racially colonized non-white women's) always already damaged and deformed relationships and disturbingly disingenuous interactions with whites, because these relationships and interactions are always already taking place in a white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. Further, these relationships and interactions, almost as if by default or automatically, take their cues from the generic gender hierarchy, sexist social superstructure, racist revulsions, colonial compulsions, capitalist constraints, religious restrictions, and linguistic laws—not to mention the myriad myths and symbols surrounding blackness and whiteness, maleness and femaleness, and richness and poorness—on which European history, culture, and so-called civilization have erected their imperial white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist empire. This means, then, that these relationships are not formed (or, rather, deformed), and these interactions do not take place, in a vacuum or some backward-thinking bourgeois feminist fantasy world where gender, and gender alone, is all that matters. Indeed, *gender does matter*, but so does race and racism, and the ways in which, when combined with colonialist and capitalist violence, oppression and exploitation, a morally repugnant and racially reductive political economy is set up where human value, humanity, and humanness are determined by how close one is in proximity to *being or possessing* whiteness, maleness, and richness. Gender matters, as does race and class, and all too often feminists who are not authentically (as opposed to “politically correctly”) antiracist, radical, or revolutionary willfully forget this, especially when they approach or, rather, *reproach* Fanon's contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation (Alcoff, 2006a, 2006b; Alcoff and Mendieta, 2003; P. H. Collins, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2006; J. Daniels, 1997; A. Y. Davis, 1981, 1989, 1998b; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; hooks, 1981, 1984, 1990, 1991, 1994a, 1995, 2000c; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2007; Hull, Scott and Smith, 1982; J. A. James, 1996, 1997, 1999; James and Sharpley-Whiting, 2000; Lorde, 1984, 1988, 1996, 2004; Mullings, 1996; Nnaemeka, 1998; B. Smith, 1983, 1998; V. Smith, 1998).

Fanon's critical lexicon was shaped and shaded by the discursive and linguistic communities of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world in which he was educated and miseducated, colonized and in the dogged process of attempting to decolonize. However, there *are* faint pro-feminist philosophical fissures in *Black Skin, White Masks* that symbolize his, however inchoate, intellectual aversions to, not simply white supremacy and colonialism, but patriarchy and the psychological violence that misogyny and male supremacy inflict on both black and white women, as well as other nonwhite racially colonized women. Fanon developed his phenomenology of racial colonial desire and recognition in, not only an antiblack racist colonial capitalist world, but also an antiwoman world. His response to white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism was revolu-

tionary decolonization, revolutionary blackness, and revolutionary humanism, which is one of the reasons he addressed *Black Skin, White Masks*, not simply to blacks, but to whites and other nonwhites as well:

I believe that the fact of the juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psychoexistential complex. I hope by analyzing it to destroy it. Many Negroes will not find themselves in what follows. This is equally true of many whites. But the fact that I feel a foreigner in the worlds of the schizophrenic or the sexual cripple in no way diminishes their reality. (p. 12)

Women were included in Fanon's phenomenology of racial colonial desire and recognition, and even though he frequently proved that he was a "foreigner" to many aspects and episodes of women's lived-experiences and lived-endurances, his texts tell us that his foreignness "in no way diminishes their reality," or the reality of any other group of suffering human souls. He knew that not all black *and* white, men *and* women would "find themselves" in *Black Skin, White Masks*, which is probably why some feminists find useful pro-feminist fragments scattered throughout the text, and his feminist critics generally do not find anything of value in his contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation. Not finding any value in his actually existing contributions is different than acerbically arguing that he did not make any contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation and, then, insincerely rendering those—again, "actually existing"—contributions nonexistent or invisible.

In essence, "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman" advance that the racially colonized nonwhite's gender is, ultimately, inconsequential, to a certain extent, in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world because to be nonwhite is irrationally and automatically, by the logic of that very vulgar world, to be nonmale and, therefore, nonhuman or, at best, subhuman. Hence, there is a terse and twisted type of transgender injustice that haunts and harries each and every interaction between the nonwhite colonized and the white colonizer owing to the fact that the hideous racial and gender hierarchies of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world renders nonwhites, again, whether male or female, anonymous and invisible, and this anonymity and invisibility is not only racial, but also extended to gender. However, even though the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world downplayed and dismissed gender—essentially women's lived-experiences and lived-endurances—and reduced the multidimensionality of the human personality to the zero-sum game of race and ethnicity, Fanon continued to accent, in his own unique way, the crucial importance of gender analysis for any authentic dialectical and critical theory of racial colonial alienation and disalienation. In his second book, *A Dying Colonialism*, he offered up what many radical and

revolutionary feminists and womanists believe to be several of his definitive contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation. In *A Dying Colonialism* Fanon critically, and more assertively than in *Black Skin, White Masks*, connected the lived-experiences and lived-endurances of the racially colonized with those of the racially gendered *and* colonized, which, to reiterate, all racially colonized people are actually clandestinely gendered, but it is the white colonizers, especially the white male colonizers of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world who have the unmitigated and grotesque gall or, more specifically, the *white power* to gender or *degender*; to render the gender of nonwhites and nonmales absent or present, invisible or visible, androgynously asexually ambiguous or exotically erotically supersexed as they wantonly wish; they, and they alone, decide and determine when, where, and to whom gender does, or does not matter. Two chapters in particular from *A Dying Colonialism*—"Algeria Unveiled" and "The Algerian Family"—represent Fanon's (1965) turn toward a more nuanced engagement of gender and the ways in which women, and the "Algerian woman" in particular, "like her brothers, had minutely built up defense mechanisms which enable her today to play a primary role in the struggle for liberation" (p. 65). Let us look, then, at the Fanonian text that most represents gender's move from margin to center, and what have been described as Fanon's definitive contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation.

**A DYING COLONIALISM AND A LIVING PATRIARCHY:  
UNVEILING THE HYPER-RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITICAL  
PATRIARCHAL ENEMY WITHIN AND UNVEILING THE  
WHITE SUPREMACIST PATRIARCHAL COLONIAL  
CAPITALIST WITHOUT—OR, UNVEILING ALGERIA  
AND FURTHER UNVEILING FANON'S CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO WOMEN'S DECOLONIZATION AND  
WOMEN'S LIBERATION**

The first chapter of Fanon's second book, *A Dying Colonialism*, is entitled "Algeria Unveiled." In the chapter, Fanon imaginatively and mockingly ventriloquizes the irrational ethos of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. Here he makes women's decolonization, women's liberation, and patriarchy—the patriarchy of the white colonizers *and* the patriarchy of the nonwhite colonized—his main critical theoretical preoccupation. Fanon argues that the patriarchy of both the white colonizers and the nonwhite colonized are complicated and rendered all the more complex because it is always already much more than male supremacy on account of the fact that it is constantly being exacerbated and perpetuated

in a white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. In what ways does white supremacy and/or European imperialism shape and shade the kind of patriarchy that racially colonized women of color experience? How does the often preexisting or, rather, precolonial patriarchy of the racially colonized nonwhite nation compound and complicate all the colonized's (both men and women's) quest for decolonization and liberation? Why is it necessary to address and incorporate women's decolonization and women's liberation from both white supremacist patriarchal colonialism and nonwhite males' precolonial patriarchal colonialism at the outset and incessantly throughout the course of the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization, as well as strongly stress that there cannot and will not be "true" decolonization unless and until women's life-worlds and lived-experiences are decolonized and liberated on their own radical and revolutionary feminist and womanist terms? In "Algeria Unveiled," Fanon amazingly offers pro-feminist and pro-womanist answers to these questions.

The Algerian woman is seen by both the white colonizing patriarchs and the nonwhite colonized patriarchal nationalists as, literally, the living "flesh" of the racially colonized national body, and so begins the "battle of the veil," and with deeper and deeper "Western penetration" the "forbidden" feminine mystique, the long-sequestered *hijab*-covered heads and *burka*-bound beautiful bodies of white supremacist patriarchal colonial fantasy and desire are "revealed to them," and humiliatingly "piece by piece, the flesh of Algeria" is "laid bare" for all the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world to see, to touch and, ultimately, to "rape" (pp. 36, 42). In "Algeria Unveiled," Fanon accented the ways in which racially colonized nonwhite women's gender was recognized by white supremacist patriarchal colonialism, not to sincerely support women's decolonization and women's liberation, but only on account of their iniquitous efforts to further European imperialism and, more specifically, the French racialization and colonization of Algeria. "The Algerian woman," contended Fanon, "an intermediary between obscure forces and the group," between white colonizing patriarchs and nonwhite colonized patriarchal nationalists, "appeared in this perspective," from the perspective of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, "to assume a primordial importance" (p. 37).<sup>9</sup>

The racially colonized nonwhite woman "assume[s] a primordial importance" to the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world because she is believed to be key to the continuation of racial colonialism if—and this is an extremely important *if*—she can be "duped" into diverting her agency and power to supporting white supremacist patriarchal colonialism and rupturing her relationship with the supposed source of racially colonized nonwhite nationalist men's power: their "childish" and "primitive" preoccupation with maintaining their precolonial male supremacy at all costs, even in light of their commitments to decolonization and liberation.

Fanon exposed the irrational “logic” of the white supremacist patriarchal colonialists:

The officials of the French administration in Algeria, committed to destroying the people’s originality, and under instructions to bring about the disintegration, at whatever cost, of forms of existence likely to evoke a national reality directly or indirectly, were to concentrate their efforts on the wearing of the veil, which was looked upon at this juncture as a symbol of the status of the Algerian woman. Such a position is not the consequence of a chance intuition. It is on the basis of the analyses of sociologists and ethnologists that the specialists in so-called native affairs and the heads of the Arab Bureaus coordinated their work. At an initial stage, there was a pure and simple adoption of the well-known formula, “Let’s win over the women and the rest will follow.” This definition of policy merely gave a scientific coloration to the “discoveries” of the sociologists. (p. 37)<sup>10</sup>

Fanon offers us several insights here. First, he demonstrates that the white supremacist patriarchal colonialists’ interest in the social conditions of racially colonized nonwhite women is false and utterly absurd. Fanon critically comprehends the ways in which white supremacist patriarchal colonialism rearranges the gender, sexual, social, and political economy of racially colonized nonwhites, constantly dividing and conquering them, thwarting any and all efforts they make to unite in the interest of toppling white supremacist patriarchal colonialism. He emphasizes the negative dialectics of white supremacist patriarchal colonialism, observing that it does not simply have a white supremacist dimension, but a male supremacist dimension as well. Hence, when and where white supremacist patriarchal colonialism is threatened or weakened by racial or cultural nationalism, when and where it cannot create “ethnic conflicts,” “ethnic cleansings,” and treacherous “tribalisms” between racially colonized nonwhites to keep them divided and conquered, then it pulls out its secret weapon: *white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism*.

White supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism is a false feminism that is premised on *white supremacist patriarchal colonial pseudo-social science*. Above Fanon hints at how incredibly coordinated the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world is: from its military to its media; from its academy to its religious institutions; from its commercial industries to its entertainment industries. Nothing is sacred, and it will use anything and anyone to maintain its gruesome grip on the lives, lands, and labor of racially colonized nonwhites (Asiwaju, 2001; Chancy-Smith and Gouda, 1998; Daughton, 2006; Ginio, 2006; Hargreaves, 2005; Irbouh, 2005; Osborne, 1994; Prochaska, 1990; Sherzer, 1996; Stovall and Van den Abbeele, 2003; Suret-Canale, 1971). White supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism is actually *not* about improving the social status of racially colo-



nized nonwhite women at all—which would mean morally and politically committing and contributing to nonwhite women's decolonization and liberation—but, it is more about the continuation of colonialism and, even more, about exposing or, rather, *unveiling* the “medieval and barbaric,” the “sadistic and vampirish” patriarchy of racially colonized nonwhite nationalist men (Fanon, 1965, p. 38). In its own incredibly skewed way white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism believed that it offered racially colonized nonwhite women a “choice,” but racially colonized nonwhite women were immediately hip to the ruse: it was a fiercely false “choice” between the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, or the precolonial patriarchal world dominated by narrow-minded nationalist and hypocritically hyper-religious nonwhite men. The racially colonized nonwhite women's response was decidedly loud and clear: They chose neither. They chose to simultaneously combat white supremacist patriarchal colonialism *and* “traditional” patriarchal nationalism and hyper-religious hypocrisy. They chose to create their own revolutionary alternative, one that neither the white supremacist patriarchal colonists nor the nonwhite racially colonized patriarchal nationalists offered in their respective programs of (re)colonization and “false” decolonization.

The white supremacist patriarchal colonialists' efforts to “liberate” “oppressed” Algerian women was, therefore, nothing other than another neocolonial maneuver to recolonize Algeria. Again, Fanon mocks the madness of the irrational “logic” of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world: “If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight” (p. 38). White supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism is a feminism that promises, promotes, and is predicated on “cultural destruction,” and *not* the “cultural destruction” of patriarchal culture, but the “cultural destruction” of racially colonized nonwhites' precolonial and anticolonial culture (p. 49).

In “liberating” Algerian women, by unveiling them, the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world would use its liberalism and feminism as instruments of discrimination, domination, and, ultimately, “cultural destruction.” Moreover, in unveiling Algerian women, the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world would also symbolically render the Algerian man naked, exposing him in the worst way, making him shamefully vulnerable before the world, and simultaneously sowing the seeds of resentment between him and the Algerian woman. After all, based on the irrational “logic” of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, it is the racially colonized Algerian patriarchal nationalists' fault that Algerian women are treated in such a “medieval and barbaric” way: “Just imagine it,” white colonists, especially white women colonists, contended,

"they are covered from head to toe. Poor things, *meskîn*." Fanon put it this way: White "[c]olonial society blazes up vehemently against this inferior status of the Algerian woman. Its members worry and show concern for those unfortunate women, doomed 'to produce brats,' kept behind walls," basically "banned," for all intents and purposes (p. 40). Veiled Algerian women, everywhere and always denying the white supremacist patriarchal colonialists their supposedly God-given right, again, to see, to touch, and ultimately to "rape."

In unveiling Algerian women, and by sowing the seeds of resentment toward Algerian men, the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world hideously hoped that it could "dupe" the Algerian woman into being "an ally in the work of cultural destruction" and a two-faced white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminist agent, surreptitiously sowing the seeds of Algerian "cultural destruction" and European imperialism (p. 49). Fanon's words deftly hit home: "In the colonialist program, it was the woman who was given the historic mission of shaking up the Algerian man. Converting the woman, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical, effective means of destructuring Algerian culture" (p. 39).

White supremacist women colonists joined their white supremacists patriarchal colonial men in what they were either "duped" or, based on their internalization of the irrational "logic" of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, dishonorably "honestly" believed to be the "noble" work of "liberating" Algerian women who had lived their lives under the auspices of a most "medieval and barbaric" patriarchy, which transformed them into nothing other than "an inert, demonetized, indeed dehumanized object" (p. 38). White supremacist women colonists wanted to "liberate" Algerian women and bring them into a more "modern," more "civilized" form of patriarchy, which, of course, was the more political, more sophisticated patriarchy of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. We see, then, that this is nothing other than the original white supremacist and European imperial "civilize and Christianize" approach to racially colonized nonwhite people's cultures and civilizations, and the difference is that the rules and ruses of the game have changed, placing racially colonized nonwhite women at the center, but, we should earnestly ask, for what purpose and in whose interest? Fanon revealed the complicity of the French feminists in the false Algerian women's liberation campaign that was initiated by white supremacists patriarchal colonial men. The French feminists, however well-meaning from their own point of view, were crucial collaborators in the continued racialization and colonization of Algeria, and Algerian women in specific. They paternalistically decided what was best for Algerian women without consulting Algerian

women. This was not feminism, and certainly not radical or revolutionary feminism but, as stated above, white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism. Fanon characteristically sliced through their hypocrisy with words that (when really and critically read) continue to cause controversy:

Mutual aid societies and societies to promote solidarity with Algerian women sprang up in great number. Lamentations were organized. "We want to make the Algerian ashamed of the fate that he metes out to women." This was a period of effervescence, of putting into application a whole technique of infiltration, in the course of which droves of social workers and women directing charitable works descended on the Arab quarters. The indigent and famished women were the first to be besieged. Every kilo of semolina distributed was accompanied by a dose of indignation against the veil and cloister. The indignation was followed up by practical advice. Algerian women were invited to play "a functional, capital role" in the transformation of their lot. They were pressed to say no to a centuries-old subjection. The immense role they were called upon to play was described to them. The colonial administration invested great sums in this combat. After it had been posited that the woman constituted the pivot of Algerian society, all efforts were made to obtain control over her. The Algerian, it was assured, would not stir, would resist the task of cultural destruction undertaken by the occupier, would oppose assimilation, so long as his woman had not reversed the stream. (pp. 38–39)

Based on the irrational "logic" of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, an inversion of sorts was now necessary to continue colonialism. Instead of directly targeting Algerian men, it would "get them" by focusing on Algerian women and indoctrinating them with a false feminism, white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism. Never mind that Algerian men were similarly "indigent and famished" under French colonialism, what white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism demanded was the aforementioned *discourse of comparative suffering*, where sufferers sit around angrily arguing over who is *the most* oppressed and, therefore, they are distracted from the ongoing struggle to end their oppression. White supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism wished to fool Algerian women into believing that *all* of their suffering was due to the patriarchy and hyper-religious hypocrisy of Algerian men, and not, as it actually was, partially (if not equally, or more so) predicated on white supremacist patriarchal colonialism. White supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists offered French colonialism, and thereby French "civilization," as an alternative to the patriarchy and hyper-religious hypocrisy of Algerian men, in their white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminist minds' transfiguring it, making French colonialism in Algeria a "women's liberation" movement.

Again, according to Fanon, Algerian women were hip to the ruse. The hidden hypocrisy of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists

was quickly and easily detected. Algerian women were well aware that white women colonists in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world were always and ever, however unbeknownst to themselves, in collusion with the racial, gender, and class (i.e., the racist, sexist, and classist) hierarchy of that world. From Algerian women's point of view, there was no principled way for the white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists to get around it; the only viable alternative was to morally and politically commit themselves to Algerian (among other racially colonized nonwhite) women's decolonization and liberation. The white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists made the major mistake of underestimating Algerian women's pre-colonial and anticolonial traditions of critical thought and, however subtly as a result of the patriarchy and hyper-religious hypocrisy of Algerian men, Algerian women's cultural criticism and social activism.<sup>11</sup> The myriad ways in which white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists benefited from the oppression, exploitation, and violence—the "cultural destruction" discussed above—suffered by Algerians, both female *and* male, was not lost on Algerian women, and, in fact, they were extremely insulted by the white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists' paternalism or, rather, their *feminist paternalism*, if you will. If this is what French women called "feminism," if this was their version of "feminism," then, most Algerian women wanted nothing whatsoever to do with it, and they let it be known that they rejected French "feminism" without in any way precluding their principled commitments to women's decolonization and women's liberation.

Another issue the white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists did not understand with regard to Algerian women and the wearing of the veil had to do with racial colonial sexual violence. Fanon wrote at length about the racial colonial desires and exotic-erotic imaginings of the white supremacist patriarchal colonists. In the white supremacist patriarchal colonial imagination, unveiling Algerian women, stripping them of their precolonial or traditional clothing, was simultaneously an act of "cultural destruction" and an act of rape. This is because in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial imagination, with each piece of the veil that forcibly falls to the ground, so too does another piece of Algerian culture. The white supremacist patriarchal colonists have long been "frustrated" by Algerian women and their "blasted!" veils because they disrupt the racial colonial sexual gaze: "This woman who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer. There is no reciprocity. She does not yield herself, does not give herself, does not offer herself" (p. 44).

In not "yield[ing] herself," in not "giv[ing] herself," in not "offer[ing] herself" as any "good" racially colonized nonwhite woman would, the Algerian woman is marked—in fact, *she* marks *herself* by continuing to wear the veil—in the messed-up Manichaean, white supremacist patriarchal colonial imagination for special racial colonial sexual conquest:

rape (Khanna, 2003; Mernissi, 1987, 1991; Paxton, 1999; Shirazi, 2001). Above it was asserted that the racially colonized women of Algeria metaphorically represent the living-flesh of Algeria; in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial imagination this "flesh" must be branded, it must bear the marks of "Western penetration" and Algerian "cultural destruction." Fanon revealed that white supremacist patriarchal colonists' desire to unveil and "liberate" Algerian women was just another one of their wild white supremacist patriarchal colonial fantasies masquerading as a commitment to the authentic Algerian women's liberation movement. It was nothing other than a new way to sow the seeds of resentment between Algerian women and men and—and this is the main point here—a new diabolically disguised way to recolonize Algerian women by "liberating" them from the previous precolonial myths and stereotypes white supremacist patriarchal colonists held of them, and branding and imprisoning them in the exotic-erotic racial colonial sexually violent myths and stereotypes of the "modern" white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. As the white supremacist patriarchal colonists "liberate" Algerian women, that is, as Algerian women *take off* the veil, they, unbeknownst to themselves, agree in that very act of "cultural destruction," to *take on* white supremacist patriarchal colonial sexual violence. In the white supremacist patriarchal colonial imagination unveiled (or unveiling) Algerian women have always already symbolically submitted to French colonization and "Western penetration," therefore, the act of rape—from the messed-up Manichaean point of view of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world—makes perfect sense and, indeed, is the "logical" retribution for Algerian women agreeing to be "all[ies] in the work of cultural destruction" (Fanon, 1965, p. 49).

Fanon focused on the ways in which the white supremacist patriarchal colonists' wicked whims and wishes, their dreams and deep-seated sado-masochistic desires toward Algerian women deepened and developed as there was greater and graver "Western penetration" into the living-flesh of Algeria. Observe that the white supremacist patriarchal colonists' "dream" of "liberating" Algerian women by unveiling them was actually a sexually violent, super-sado-masochistic nightmare:

The history of the French conquest in Algeria, including the overrunning of villages by the troops, the confiscation of property and the raping of women, the pillaging of a country, has contributed to the birth and the crystallization of the same dynamic image. At the level of the psychological strata of the occupier, the evocation of this freedom given to the sadism of the conqueror, to his eroticism, creates faults, fertile gaps through which both dreamlike forms of behavior and, on certain occasions, criminal acts can emerge. Thus the rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of a European is always preceded by a rending of the veil. We here witness a double deflowering. Likewise, the woman's

conduct is never one of consent or acceptance, but of abject humility. Whenever, in dreams having erotic content, a European meets an Algerian woman, the specific features of his relations with the colonized society manifest themselves. These dreams evolve neither on the same erotic plane, nor at the same tempo, as those that involve a European woman. (pp. 45–46)

In the white supremacist patriarchal colonists' dream (and the Algerian woman's nightmare), Algerian women are treated in a way distinctly different from the way in which white women are treated, even "in dreams having erotic content." We witness here the force and farce of the French colonists' white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism, which was allegedly aimed at "liberating" Algerian women from the veil and the patriarchy and hyper-religious hypocrisy of Algerian men:

With the Algerian woman, there is no progressive conquest, no mutual revelation. Straight off, with the maximum of violence, there is possession, rape, near-murder. The act assumes a para-neurotic brutality and sadism, even in a normal European. This brutality and this sadism are in fact emphasized by the frightened attitude of the Algerian woman. In the dream, the woman-victim screams, struggles like a doe, and as she weakens and faints, is penetrated, martyred, ripped apart. (p. 46; see also Hessini, 1996)

In no way wishing to make it appear to apologize for, or excuse the inexcusable patriarchy and hyper-religious hypocrisy of Algerian men, it should be pointed out that whatever form, or forms, of patriarchy Algerian women experienced prior to French colonialism, when compared with the super-sadomasochism of that white supremacist patriarchal colonialism, the promises of white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminism are proven to be ferociously false, nothing other than a neocolonial negotiation between white supremacist colonizing men and women. The white supremacist patriarchal colonial feminists—that is, the liberal racist French feminists—played their parts perfectly, and so we witness, once again, the peculiar uses to which the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world puts "feminism," albeit in all actuality a false "feminism" sinfully synthesized with racism and colonialism and used as an indispensable instrument for imperial purposes. Therefore, at the very moment that Algerian women are "liberated" from the centuries-spanning "demonetized" objectification(s) of Algerian men, they are in that very same second reobjectified and recolonized in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial imagination and they are also physically and psychologically sexually violated, both raped and robbed of their subjectivity.

The French colonists, once again, made the major mistake of underestimating Algerian women's precolonial and anticolonial traditions of critical thought, cultural criticism, and social activism. They were not the "inert" and "dehumanized object[s]" that either the colonizing French patriarchs

and feminists or the colonized patriarchal Algerian nationalists and religious zealots imagined, but all together very different, and very *human* (as opposed to *subhuman* or, worst, *nonhuman*) beings. Up to this point, Fanon's narrative detailed the major points and essential episodes that resulted in Algerian women's pivotal participation in the Algerian revolution. Here his narrative takes a remarkable turn and goes far—very far according to several radical and revolutionary feminists and womanists—to demonstrate that Algerian women forged a “new humanity” and a new womanhood as they ruptured their relationships with precolonial and colonial patriarchal traditions, and as they further entrenched themselves in the process(es) of revolutionary decolonization and human liberation on their own terms.

According to the Algerian feminist-activist Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas (1999), Algerian women were active participants in the Algerian revolution from its inception, though, mostly contributing via various traditional patriarchally sanctioned women's roles, such as guerilla guides, nurses, cooks, washerwomen, seamstresses, and secretaries (pp. 273–274). Moreover, even at the outset of the war the French symbolically used Algerian women's oppression, especially the veil, as pro-colonial cannon fodder, which in turn gave way to Algerian men's furious riposte and raising of the issue of the French rape of Algerian women, “the overrunning of villages by the troops, the confiscation of property and . . . the pillaging of [their] country.” From Algerian men's point of view, French colonialism represented in a very real way the “double deflowering” of Algeria, raping and robbing them of *their* land and *their* women, both symbolizing the living-flesh of Algeria.

Algerian women, therefore, were always actively involved in the war, if not symbolically at its center, even as they physically lived their lives on the margins of both the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world of the French *and* the hyper-religious hypocritical and patriarchal nationalist world of Algerian men. However, in 1955 everything changed and, to my mind, there simply is no substitute for Fanon's characterization and critical explanation of *what* brought about the change and *why* women were enlisted in the Algerian revolution. I, therefore, quote the pertinent paragraph in its entirety:

Until 1955, the combat was waged exclusively by the men. The revolutionary characteristics of this combat, the necessity for absolute secrecy, obliged the militant to keep his woman in absolute ignorance. As the enemy gradually adapted himself to the forms of combat, new difficulties appeared which required original solutions. The decision to involve women as active elements of the Algerian Revolution was not reached lightly. In a sense, it was the very conception of the combat that had to be modified. The violence of the occupier, his ferocity, his delirious attachments to the national territory, induced the leaders no longer to exclude certain forms of combat. Progressively, the urgency of a total war made itself felt. But involving the women was not solely

a response to the desire to mobilize the entire nation. The women's entry into the war had to be harmonized with respect for the revolutionary nature of the war. In other words, the women had to show as much spirit of sacrifice as the men. It was therefore necessary to have the same confidence in them as was required from seasoned militants who had served several prison sentences. A moral elevation and a strength of character that were altogether exceptional would therefore be required of the women. There was no lack of hesitation. The revolutionary wheels had assumed such proportions; the mechanism was running at a given rate. The machine would have to be complicated; in other words its network would have to be extended without affecting its efficiency. The women could not be conceived of as a replacement product, but as an element capable of adequately meeting the new tasks. (Fanon, 1965, p. 48)

We witness here that "[t]he decision to involve women as active elements of the Algerian Revolution was not reached lightly," and that "decision" was not completely made by anticolonial Algerian men but, to a certain extent, was dictated by the fact that "new difficulties appeared which required original solutions." Fanon wrote with great irony that prior to 1955 "the militant [kept] *his* woman in absolute ignorance," but being a double-edged sword French racial colonialism forced anticolonial Algerian patriarchal hyper-religious nationalists to change their patriarchal traditions and policies toward Algerian women's participation in the revolution. As Fanon saw it, this was only the beginning, and one of the unforeseeable "positives" of the ferocity of French racial colonialism was that it ultimately made Algerian patriarchs critically rethink, loosen, and, in several cases, abandon altogether many of their precolonial patriarchal traditions and practices (Goutor, 1965; Hessini, 1996; Jacquiers, 1992; Knauss, 1987). In unequivocal language, Fanon (1965) summed up the situation: "When colonized people undertake an action against the oppressor, and when this oppression is exercised in the form of exacerbated and continuous violence as in Algeria, they must overcome a considerable number of taboos" (p. 51).

In "Fanon and Gender Agency," feminist theorist Anne McClintock has taken issue with Fanon's account of Algerian women's agency and their "official" entry into the revolution. According to McClintock (1999), "Fanon's thoughts on women's agency proceed through a series of contradictions" (p. 290). From her feminist point of view, the first contradiction is to be found in Fanon's ambiguity over when and where Algerian women's agency was initiated. She queries: "Where, for Fanon, does women's agency begin?" The irony here is that in raising this completely valid critical question and aggressively criticizing Fanon from what appears to be a poststructural and postmodern feminist perspective, McClintock herself does not offer an answer to the question. It would seem that an otherwise sophisticated poststructural and postmodern feminist such as McClintock would be able to



detect the crucial difference between destructive criticism and constructive criticism, but here she seems to be self-righteously committed to the former and to have all but forgotten the latter. As a consequence, her would-be critical question hangs in thin air, waiting for her to answer it, and I mean answer it to the discursive depth and critical detail that would sufficiently satisfy not simply poststructural and postmodern feminists such as herself but also the more historically and culturally grounded revolutionary feminists and womanists who take a more dialectical approach to Fanon's contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation.<sup>12</sup>

The second charge of contradiction McClintock levels against Fanon involves what she perceives to be his insistence that the Algerian woman learned her "revolutionary mission instinctively," as Fanon put it. While it is true that Fanon (1965) did in fact argue that: "It must be constantly borne in mind that the committed Algerian woman learns both her role as 'a woman alone in the street' and her revolutionary mission instinctively" (p. 50). It is equally true that when this sentence is placed in its original context in *A Dying Colonialism*, as it will be below, Fanon was not in any way attempting to argue that Algerian women *only*—in some sort of euphemistic sense—intuited their "revolutionary mission," but rather that because they "officially" joined the Algerian revolution in the bitter heat of an ongoing bloody battle and because revolutionary women's training camps were nonexistent, they seemed to be *extraordinarily* (especially considering their contentions with both white supremacist patriarchal colonialism from without *and* hyper-religious nationalist patriarchy from within) *self-educated, self-motivated, self-reliant, self-determined, and self-defining* when and where we come to their participation in, and contributions to the Algerian revolution—and, though I know that I need not say it, but here goes anyhow: these qualities and characteristics remain many of the most hallowed hallmarks of revolutionary feminism and womanism. Fanon, therefore, was not simply comparing revolutionary Algerian women to revolutionary Algerian men, but, even more, he was comparing revolutionary Algerian women to the "Western woman" who has "read about ever so many times in novels, or seen in motion pictures" representations of women in "roles" as "resistance fighters or even secret agents." Fanon was not being euphemistic or condescending toward Algerian women but was attempting to convey to his readers Algerian women's special "spirit of sacrifice," not simply when compared to Algerian male revolutionaries, but also—and I believe that the true heart of the matter is here—when compared with "Western" or white women.

If, indeed, McClintock would like to find fault, perhaps she should take it to the Algerian hyper-religious hypocrites and patriarchs who both before and after the Algerian revolution erased or rendered women socially and politically invisible in Algerian society. Also, McClintock may want to

ask where are the texts that document and critically detail, as *A Dying Colonialism* does, Algerian women's participation in, and contributions to the Algerian revolution written by indigenous Algerian males who participated in the revolution, and, sad to say, many of whom, if truth be told, continue to regard Fanon as a foolish "foreigner" or a "meddler" in Muslim matters because he documented and critically detailed women's participation in, and contributions to the Algerian revolution. Lastly, it is curious that McClintock does not find fault with the French white supremacist patriarchal colonists for the ways in which their racial colonial programs and policies specifically targeted Algerian women revolutionaries, and actually, as Fanon shared, "[a]rrested, tortured, raped," and "shot down" Algerian female freedom fighters. It seems that Fanon is being mercilessly criticized and rudely textually reviled for not engaging women's agency following the theoretic fashions of poststructural and postmodern feminists, but this does not in any way negate the fact that he indeed *did* explore and critically analyze Algerian women's agency and their participation in and concrete contributions to the Algerian revolution.

*A Dying Colonialism* is a testament to the fact that Algerian women rose to the occasion and made indelible contributions to the Algerian revolution. However, if truth be told, they did not "join" the revolution when Algerian men finally paternalistically decided that they could, and when they did "join" they did not do so on Algerian males' patriarchal terms. Again, as Helie-Lucas's work reveals, Algerian women were actively participating in the revolution long before Algerian men paternalistically decided that they could "join." She gives critical discussion to the ways in which Algerian women and their contributions to the Algerian revolution have consistently been unacknowledged, or euphemistically misrepresented and misnamed when and where they have been acknowledged. During the war and in its aftermath, Helie-Lucas (1999) asserts, "gender distinctions persisted" (p. 272).

Algerian women, then, were at war with French patriarchal racial colonialism *and* Algerian patriarchal religious nationalism as well. The war or, rather, *their* revolution was both against external forces *and* internal forces, against iniquity without *and* iniquity within. Helie-Lucas laid into the issue: "If a man carried food to the armed fighters at great personal risk, he was called a 'fighter.' A woman doing the same was called a 'helper.' If a man risked his life to hide armed fighters or wanted political leaders, he was called a 'fighter.' A woman doing the same was simply performing the female task of 'nurturing.'" She critically continued, "Nor was she considered a fighter when she collected fuel or food for the fighters, or carried their guns, or guided them through the mountains. She was merely helping men." Then, Helie-Lucas importantly and ironically concluded, "Only the French army acknowledged her action by imprisoning and torturing her in

concentration camps and killing her" (p. 272). Old habits die hard, and we see here that even as Algerian patriarchal religious nationalists were willing to "allow" women to participate in the revolution, they wanted the women to participate on their patriarchal religious nationalist terms and, therefore, the majority of Algerian men did not in any comprehensive way abandon their patriarchy. Algerian men's enlistment of women in the revolution was a political and military maneuver, and once Algerian independence was "granted" by the French, the hands of history—actually the hands of patriarchal hyper-religious Algerian historians—swept Algerian women's contributions to the revolution away, burying them in unmarked graves on the bloodstained battlefield(s) where they fought side by side with their "brothers" and "comrades-in-arms."

This enormous commitment and "spirit of sacrifice" on the part of Algerian women was all the more remarkable when the Algerian male leaders of the revolution took stock of "the ferocity of the colonizer" toward Algerian women, veiled or unveiled. Fanon (1965) related that none "of them failed to realize that any Algerian woman arrested would be tortured to death" (p. 49). This gave the Algerian male leaders pause, great pause. "It is relatively easy to commit oneself to this path and to accept among different eventualities that of dying under torture." However, "[t]he matter is a little more difficult when it involves designating someone who manifestly runs the risk of certain death" (p. 49). If, indeed, Algerian women's participation in the revolution was their "run[ning] the risk of certain death," then, we may ask, were the male leaders of the Algerian revolution, however reluctantly, willing to sacrifice Algerian women on the altar of white supremacist patriarchal colonial super-sadomasochism in order to, not simply "liberate" Algeria but to reinstate their precolonial patriarchal religious nationalism? This seems like a fair question considering the ways in which Algerian women's contributions to the Algerian revolution have been erased or rendered invisible.

Fanon's "Algeria Unveiled" went far to provide a window into the world of Algerian women's contributions to the Algerian revolution. He made it a point to strongly stress that unlike the men who participated in the Algerian revolution, the women courageously participated without prior military training, which brings us right back to Fanon's above reference to their "spirit of sacrifice" and his statement that "[a] moral elevation and a strength of character that were altogether exceptional would therefore be required of the women." If there were no military training camps for Algerian female freedom fighters, and very few, if any, major (female) military models for them, then, how did they develop such "moral elevation" and "strength of character" (Fanon, 1965, p. 107)? And, what is more, how did they develop this "moral elevation" and "strength of character" so quickly, in the midst of their war-torn world? This "moral elevation" and "strength

of character" must have been there all the time, right under Algerian men's noses (or boots), but patriarchy renders women, at least in the eyes of the patriarch, the very "inert," "demonetized," and "dehumanized object[s]" that Fanon identified and discussed at the outset of the essay.

An additional issue in terms of Algerian women's involvement in the revolution was that not only were there no female military training camps, but also there was no training for the "roles" that they played as "resistance fighters or even secret agents of the specialized services" (p. 50). Fanon hits at the heart of the matter:

In the face of the extraordinary success of this new form of popular combat, observers have compared the action of the Algerian women to that of certain women resistance fighters or even secret agents of the specialized services. It must be constantly borne in mind that the committed Algerian woman learns both her role as "a woman alone in the street" and her revolutionary mission instinctively. The Algerian woman is not a secret agent. It is without apprenticeship, without briefing, without fuss, that she goes out in the street with three grenades in her handbag or the activity report of an area in her bodice. She does not have the sensation of playing a role she has read about ever so many times in novels, or seen in motion pictures. There is not that coefficient of play, of imitation, almost always present in this form of action when we are dealing with a Western woman. What we have here is not the bringing to light of a character known and frequented a thousand times in imagination or in stories. It is an authentic birth in a pure state, without preliminary instruction. There is no character to imitate. On the contrary, there is an intense dramatization, a continuity between the woman and the revolutionary. The Algerian woman rises directly to the level of tragedy. (p. 50)

An amazing transformation of the Algerian woman's personality and physicality takes place in the course of her participation in the revolution. Where she once would have been extremely uncomfortable to appear publicly without a veil, now she disguises herself as an unveiled assimilated Algerian woman, "a woman alone in the street." This same Algerian woman warrior will, also, wear a veil when necessary, transforming herself into a "woman-arsenal," according to Fanon, using the veil as an anticolonial camouflage to carry various essentials for the revolution (p. 58). For many female freedom fighters, then, the veil was—however temporarily—transformed from an instrument of oppression to a means of liberation. Fanon touched on the irony of unveiled and seemingly assimilated, but actually deeply committed revolutionary Algerian women: "Carrying revolvers, grenades, hundreds of false identity cards or bombs, the unveiled Algerian woman moves like a fish in the Western waters. The soldiers, the French patrols, smile to her as she passes, compliments on her looks are heard here and there, but no one suspects that her suitcases contain the automatic

pistol which will presently mow down four or five members of the patrols" (p. 58).

There is a sense in which the anticolonial unveiled and unassimilated Algerian woman's unveiling represented both changes in her relationship with the men, the patriarchs of Algeria but, more importantly, changes within herself and with her body. Unveiling was both traumatic and triumphant for Algerian women, both intimidating and liberating because after having been forced to wear the veil for so long and then to suddenly be without it was, for all practical purposes, to be "naked." Fanon critically engaged the dream content of recently unveiled Algerian women involved in the revolution, and his revelations were nothing short of shocking: "One must have heard the confessions of Algerian women or have analyzed the dream content of certain recently unveiled women to appreciate the importance of the veil for the body of the woman. Without the veil she has an impression of her body being cut up into bits, put adrift; the limbs seem to lengthen indefinitely" (p. 59). Having been harassed and hounded by the fear of public, familial, and personal humiliation and physical harm were they ever to have ventured out of their "homes" without their veils, now these same women were bitterly asked by the same men who veiled them, who quarantined and sequestered their bodies and souls, to unveil for the revolution, unveil to "liberate" *their* "fatherland." Is it any wonder, then, that these women felt that their bodies were being "cut up into bits" or their limbs broken and stretched beyond belief? Were they not being pulled in several different directions—psychologically, socially, politically, and religiously? And, what of the racial colonial sexual gaze of the French colonists, or the hyper-religious patriarchal gaze of Algerian men? Were these women not caught in the crossfire of a history-making and earth-shaking war where French colonists and Algerian nationalists jostled for, among many other things, the malfeasance of male supremacy, the very wrong patriarchal right to rule over Algeria, especially Algerian women, the living-flesh of Algeria, as they damn well militaristically and misogynistically pleased?

Combating their fears or, at the least, learning to live with them and use them as a transforming and healing force, Algerian women transfigured themselves through their participation in the Algerian revolution. Wrestling with and often rejecting her feelings of "being improperly dressed," or "being naked," or her "sense of incompleteness," or "the anxious feeling that something is unfinished," the Algerian woman warrior "quickly" invents "new dimensions for her body, new means of muscular control" (p. 59). It is almost as if the veil were some sort of cocoon, and as the Algerian woman unveiled for the purposes of the revolution, she was able to overcome centuries of patriarchal hyper-religious hypocrisy and make her own distinct contribution to the Algerian revolution. She was not the "inert" and "dehumanized object" that either the colonizing French patriarchs or the

colonized patriarchal Algerian nationalists and religious zealots imagined, but, I say again, an all together very different, and very *human* (as opposed to *subhuman* or, worst, *nonhuman*) being. Fanon drives the point home:

She has to create for herself an attitude of unveiled-woman-outside. She must overcome all timidity, all awkwardness (for she must pass for a European), and at the same time be careful not to overdo it, not to attract notice to herself. The Algerian woman who walks stark naked into the European city relearns her body, re-establishes it in a totally revolutionary fashion. This new dialectic of the body and of the world is primary in the case of one revolutionary woman. (p. 59)

### **FATHER DOES NOT KNOW BEST: ALGERIAN WOMEN WARRIORS, ALGERIAN PATRIARCHAL FATHERS, AND THE REVOLUTIONARY ALGERIAN FAMILY**

As the unveiled and unassimilated Algerian woman warrior ruptured her relationship(s) with the veil, the former symbol of the oppression, exploitation, and violence she experienced and endured in precolonial Algerian society, she also ruptured and revolutionized her relationship with her family, and most especially with her father, the Algerian patriarch. In "The Algerian Family" Fanon focused on the lived-experiences and lived-endurances of Algerian women, once again, theoretically and textually bringing them from the margin to the center. His analysis demonstrated, not simply the inner workings and interconnectedness of the Algerian family, but more how Algerian women's pivotal participation in the revolution also revolutionized their relationships with their families and respective communities. He asserted that "radical change[s]" in the social status and political participation of Algerian women "could not occur without having profound repercussions on the other components of Algerian family life" (p. 99). With the merciless and monstrous murdering of Algerian men, nationalist fathers, and brothers, and with Algerian women's ever-increasingly "on the record" or "official" participation in the revolution, the precolonial and prerevolutionary conception of the Algerian family suffered (from the traditional Algerian patriarchal point of view) a serious blow. This, too, was one of the "positives" of Algerian women's participation in and contributions to the Algerian revolution.

From Fanon's point of view, Algerian women's participation in and contributions to the Algerian revolution audaciously challenged precolonial or traditional Algerian thought and practices that previously circumscribed and sequestered them to the domestic sphere or the doldrums of patriarchally sanctioned family life. He insisted that Algerian women's increasing

revolutionary social and political activities forced the Algerian patriarchal nationalists to come to the intricate conclusion that anything that hindered *all* (meaning, both masculine *and* feminine) elements of Algerian society from making their maximum contribution to the decolonization and liberation of Algeria were, not only ineffective but, worse, counterrevolutionary. Fanon declared:

*The colonized society perceived that in order to succeed in the gigantic undertaking into which it had flung itself, in order to defeat colonialism and in order to build the Algerian nation, it would have to make a vast effort of self-preparation, strain all its joints, renew its blood and its soul.* In the course of the multiple episodes of the war, the people came to realize that if they wished to bring a new world to birth they would have to create a new Algerian society from top to bottom. In order to fulfill his [or her] aspirations, the Algerian must adapt himself [or herself] at an exceptional pace to this new situation. The truth, for once, eluded its traditional trustees and placed itself within reach of any seeker. The group, which formerly looked to the father to determine its values, now had to seek these each for himself [or herself], as circumstances dictated. Every Algerian faced with the new system of values introduced by the Revolution is compelled to define himself [or herself], to take a position, to choose. (pp. 101–102, all emphasis in original)

The Algerian revolution presented its participants with a “new system of values,” and these “values” were aimed at toppling French racial colonialism, “bring[ing] a new world to birth,” and “creat[ing] a new Algerian society from top to bottom.” Here Fanon hints at the antiquated gender hierarchy of Algeria’s precolonial and prerevolutionary past, where men were, of course, at the top and women were quarantined at the bottom (and, in many instances, beneath the bottom, at the lowest level of subhumanity or, even worst, nonhumanity). Fanon’s vision of a “new Algerian society” was inextricable from both “the destruction of colonialism” *and* “the birth of a new woman” (p. 107). Hence, we witness here that for Fanon, the “new Algerian society” was to be a simultaneously postcolonial *and* postpatriarchal society.

Fanon analytically partitioned “The Algerian Family” into several sections in his effort to critically illuminate the ways in which the Algerian revolution impacted the various precolonial and prerevolutionary familial relations and traditional patriarchal religious rules dictating those relations. In the various sections—“The Son and the Father,” “The Daughter and the Father,” “The Brothers,” “The Couple,” “Marriage and Divorce,” “Feminine Society,” and “Algeria Dispersed”—he traced the myriad transformations in and of familial relationships and patriarchal religious rules in light of the revolution and critically examined the inefficacy of obstinately adhering to, and intensely imposing brutal bygone precolonial and prerevolutionary

thought and practices during and—he made certain to emphasize—after the revolution, especially with regard to Algerian women, or else, from his point of view, it would all have been in vain and not “true” decolonization—which is to say, once again, an authentic antiracist, antisexist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist revolution or, rather, an authentic overarching anti-imperialist liberation. Fanon (1968), as we will soon see in the subsequent “form” of Fanonism, “Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism,” would prophetically and critically return to each of these issues in *The Wretched of the Earth*, warning the racially colonized to, not only rupture their relationships with European imperialism, but also their relationships with any part of their precolonial thought and practices which would block the development of “a new humanity” and “bring[ing] a new world to birth” (p. 36).

In the section of “The Algerian Family” entitled, “The Daughter and the Father,” Fanon juxtaposed girls/wives/mothers’ “place” with the role of boys/husbands/fathers’ in precolonial and prerevolutionary Algerian society, stating:

In the Algerian family, the girl is always one notch behind the boy. As in all societies in which work on the land represents the main source of the means of subsistence, the male, who is the privileged producer, enjoys an almost lordly status. The birth of a boy in a family is greeted with greater enthusiasm than that of a girl. The father sees in him a future working partner, a successor to the family plot and after his death a guardian for the mother and the sisters. The young girl, without being humiliated or neglected, cannot help being aware of the fuss made over her brother. The girl has no opportunity, all things considered, to develop her personality or to take any initiative. (p. 105)

Why Fanon believed that the “young girl, without being humiliated or neglected, cannot help being aware of the fuss made over her brother,” is unbeknownst to me, and it seems to be a glaring contradiction in light of his analyses in both “Algeria Unveiled” and the rest of “The Algerian Family.” Is this a fall back into patriarchal thought and masculinist theorizing on Fanon’s part? Is this an instance where we witness his, perhaps unconscious, internalization of the masculinist, if not male supremacist, tendency to downplay and diminish women’s lived-experiences and lived-endurances in patriarchal societies? Is this an example of what Anne McClintock (1999) referred to as the “curious rupture[s]” that “opens in Fanon’s text over the question of women’s agency” and, I should add, girls’ agency, experiences and endurances (p. 298)? Nevertheless, Fanon went on to describe girls and women’s marginalization and treatment as “minors” within the precolonial and prerevolutionary Algerian family structure.

According to Fanon, the Algerian girl “adopts automatically the behavior and the values of Algerian feminine society. From her mother she learns the higher value of the man” (p. 106). The Algerian girl/daughter is taught,



by her mother and "the values of Algerian feminine society," not to question the Algerian father and, thereby, not to question or challenge the patriarchal macrostructure of Algerian society, which rests on the patriarchal microstructure of the Algerian family. The Algerian girl/daughter was unfortunately born into a life of silence, sequestration, and, above all else, obsequiousness. As a consequence of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, and the general underdevelopment of their racially colonized country, Algerian women were seemingly quarantined to a patriarchal system where they were, hard and fast, *either* girls/daughters *or* wives/mothers who were always and forever treated as "minors" or, as Fanon caustically called it, a "childwoman" (p. 106). "The life of an Algerian woman does not develop according to the three periods known in the West—childhood, puberty, and marriage. The Algerian girl knows only two stages—childhood-puberty, and marriage" (p. 107). Notice the polarizing effect that precolonial Algerian hyper-religious patriarchy had on Algerian women's life-worlds and lived-experiences. They, literally, were never outside of men's guardianship: "The woman in an underdeveloped society, and particularly in Algeria, is always a minor, and the man—brother, uncle or husband—represents first of all a guardian" (p. 106). Therefore, there was, literally, no life, no "place" for a patriarchally unprotected and unwed woman in precolonial and pre-revolutionary Algerian society. All women, without exception, reported to, or answered in some significant way to a man, whether father, "brother, uncle or husband." Precolonial and prerevolutionary Algerian society was a pure and unadulterated patriarchal society, premised on the hyper-religious hypocrisy of progenitor patriarchs for as far back as Algerian women could recollect. This means, then, and here irony enters, that it was not Algerian women who represented an "inert" and "dehumanized object" in Algerian society, but, upon further scrutiny, the unchanging and seemingly permanent patriarchy of the society, which was "unfortunately transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonetized, indeed dehumanized object" (p. 38).

As more and more women went from "unofficially" to "officially" participating in the Algerian revolution, a remarkable transformation took place. Fanon contended, "The woman-for-marriage progressively disappeared, and gave way to the woman-for-action. The young girl was replaced by the militant, the woman by the *sister*" (p. 108, emphasis in original). Whether the patriarchs sanctioned these changes or not, which in most cases they did not and would have preferred to keep Algerian women in "their place," Algerian women increasingly became major participants in the revolution. However, as Fanon was keen to observe, for them the Algerian revolution was not only a rebellion against the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world but, equally, a rebellion against the patriarchal hyper-religious hypocrisy of precolonial and prerevolutionary Algeria. Unveil-

ing and reacquainting themselves with their own “naked” bodies in the interest of the revolution had a profound impact on the personalities and consciousnesses of Algerian women, and part of their critically developing consciousness included a distinct consciousness of patriarchy and the hyper-religious hypocrisy on the part of Algerian men. A “new woman,” one who was not a mere “replacement product, but as an element capable of adequately meeting the new tasks” of the revolution was born in the dialectical process(es) of decolonization and liberation in Algeria. Fanon weighs-in with passionate words:

All these [precolonial patriarchal] restrictions were to be knocked over and challenged by the national liberation struggle. The unveiled Algerian woman, who assumed an increasingly important place in revolutionary action, developed her personality, discovered the exalting realm of responsibility. The freedom of the Algerian people from then on became identified with woman's liberation, with her entry into history. This woman who, in the avenues of Algiers or of Constantine, would carry the grenades or the submachine-gun chargers, this woman who tomorrow would be outraged, violated, tortured, could not put herself back into her former state of mind and relive her behavior of the past; this woman who was writing the heroic pages of Algerian history was, in so doing, bursting the bounds of the narrow world in which she had lived without responsibility, and was at the same time participating in the destruction of colonialism and in the birth of a new woman. (p. 107)

We should critically question Fanon when he writes that Algerian women in the prerevolutionary period “lived without responsibility,” because he himself, in “Algeria Unveiled,” declared that, “[i]n reality, the effervescence and the revolutionary spirit have been kept alive by the woman in the home. For revolutionary war is not a war of men” (p. 66). Is this, yet another, ironic “Freudian slip” on Fanon's part? Once again, Fanon's pro-feminism puts forward a philosophical fissure that would seem to completely contradict his intentions here. Let us take this, then, as yet another reminder that we must always and everywhere critically and consciously challenge our sexist socialization and internalization of male supremacy.

According to Fanon, as the Algerian woman went from the “woman-for-marriage” to “the woman-for-action,” no longer kept in “absolute ignorance” and deeply involved in and committed to every aspect of the revolution, the thought of her being requarantined and resequestered increasingly became unthinkable and, then, the unthinkable, ultimately, became the undoable. She would not and “could not put herself back into her former state of mind and relive her behavior of the past.” This, then, is what is meant by my use of the phrase “women's decolonization.” What we witness here—as Fanon (1968) forcefully declared in *The Wretched of the Earth*—is “the veritable creation of new [wo]men,” women who are simultaneously

struggling to topple sexism, racism, colonialism *and* capitalism (p. 36). The Algerian woman's transformation from the "woman-for-marriage" to "the woman-for-action" is, perhaps, nowhere more evident than in her relationship with her father and the other men of her family. Observe here that Fanon (1965) not only captures how the Algerian revolution changed Algerian women, but also Algerian men's gender politics:

The father's attitude toward the girls remaining at home or toward any other woman met in the street inevitably underwent a radical change. And the girl who had not gone into the maquis, who was not actively engaged, became aware of the important role played by women in the revolutionary struggle. The men's words were no longer law. The women were no longer silent. Algerian society in the fight for liberation, in the sacrifices that it was willing to make in order to liberate itself from colonialism, renewed itself and developed new values governing sexual relations. The woman ceased to be a complement for man. *She literally forged a new place for herself by her sheer strength.* (p. 109, all emphasis in original)

By "her sheer strength," the Algerian woman "forged a new place for herself" in Algerian society, a place that was not created by Algerian men and did not have their patriarchal stamp of approval. Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* continues to serve as a challenge to the erasure of Algerian women's participation in and their indelible contributions to the Algerian revolution, just as the actions of the Algerian women revolutionaries he wrote about baffled the French colonists during the war years. It is ironic that Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* seems to say more about Algerian women's pivotal participation in and their indelible contributions to the Algerian revolution than Algeria's own Ministry of Veterans archives. Even if Fanon's text is riddled with "inaccuracies" and "mythmaking" concerning Algerian women's participation in and their indelible contributions to the Algerian revolution, as the Algerian feminist-activist Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas (1999) claims, it still stands as a testament to these women's awe-inspiring rebellion against oppression, exploitation, and violence, both from within *and* from without.

Fanon wrote *A Dying Colonialism* in the heat of battle and, therefore, may indeed have overexaggerated certain points or episodes or, conversely, underemphasized others. This much we must solemnly concede. However, I think that Helie-Lucas and feminists of her ilk miss one of the major points of Fanon putting pen to paper to document and critically detail Algerian women's participation in and their indelible contributions to the Algerian revolution: He was so moved by the women's "spirit of sacrifice" and their concrete contributions, which he *saw*, *heard*, and *experienced* in the Algerian revolution, that his conscience compelled him to do what it seemed few others—including Algerian women—were doing or would do, and that is

create a *textual testament* or, rather, a *martyrs monument* to the female freedom fighters of the Algerian revolution. Here is Fanon (1965) in his own heartfelt words:

It is not a war waged with an active army and reserves. Revolutionary war, as the Algerian people is waging it, is a total war in which the woman does not merely knit for or mourn the soldier. The Algerian woman is at the heart of the combat. Arrested, tortured, raped, shot down, she testifies to the violence of the occupier and to his inhumanity. As a nurse, a liaison agent, a fighter, she bears witness to the depth and the density of the struggle. . . . The woman's place in Algerian society is indicated with such vehemence that the occupier's confusion is readily understandable. This is because Algerian society reveals itself not to be the womanless society that had been so convincingly described. Side by side with us, our sisters do their part in further breaking down the enemy system and in liquidating the old mystifications once and for all. (pp. 66–67)

It seems rather curious that a male revolutionary theorist-activist who documented and critically detailed women's participation in and contributions to revolutionary struggle should be (*destructively*, as opposed to *dialectically*) criticized and accused of "inaccuracies" and "mythmaking" when the same feminist critics who criticize him bemoan male revolutionaries' long-standing and lame erasure of women's agency and contributions to revolutionary theory, praxis, and movements. Whether feminists want to acknowledge it or not, Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* lucidly (and, in certain places, lovingly) demonstrates the ways in which he, however imperfectly, side-stepped the patriarchal tendency to erase or render invisible women's agency in and contributions to history, culture, and revolution. His text clearly flies in the face of the bourgeois and antimale feminist tendency to discount and diminish profeminist and prowomanist males' contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation. This brings us to the critical question of whether men, folk such as myself, have any business writing about and theorizing *herstory*—women's history and culture, women's life-worlds and life-struggles, and/or women's lived-experiences and lived-endurances? I, of course, believe that we do, so long as we employ *women-centered* and *women-sensitive* research methods and modes of interpretation, such as revolutionary feminism and womanism, as our critical theoretical paradigms and points of departure *and*, I must strongly stress, critically, consciously, and constantly challenge our sexist socialization and internalization of patriarchy and/or male supremacy.<sup>13</sup>

If, however, feminists believe that it is impossible for men to "master" feminist and womanist research methods and modes of interpretation (i.e., "standpoints," critical perspectives, and points of view), as many antimale feminists angrily argue, then feminists unwittingly put forward the very same (or, at the least, very similar) sexist reactionary and reprehensible rhetoric

that patriarchs, misogynists, and male supremacists do—and, that is that men and women are so biologically, psychologically, intellectually, and emotionally different that in the final analysis separatism, sequestration, and silence are the only solutions to the age-old “war of the sexes.” Well, I consciously and very humbly place my lifework and legacy right alongside those of Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Frantz Fanon—all “radical women’s rights men,” all equally guilty of making mistakes and missteps with regard to their contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation, and all, at one time or another, cannon fodder for antimale feminists and, if truth be told, many masculinists and male supremacists. Therefore, this “form” of Fanonism, “Feminist Fanonism,” represents a critical retheorization of Fanon’s contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation. It audaciously and unambiguously challenges efforts to project “inaccuracies” and “mythmaking” onto Fanon’s contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation at the very momentous moment that feminists and womanists are reevaluating his, among other profeminist and prowomanist men’s, contributions.

The argument here, as we have seen, is not that Fanon, or any other male theorist who contributes to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation, is somehow immune to criticism, but that it is important to bring the dialectic to bear so that we both critique *and* appreciate, point to both negatives *and* positives, in his work. If revolutionary feminist and womanist theories, standpoints, perspectives, and/or points of view are not employed in the critical engagement and critical interrogation of Fanon’s contributions to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation, then the would-be critical theorist is theoretically stillborn or, at the least, stuck on the starting block while everyone else has already begun to run the race, stuck there on the starting block wondering whether it is possible for a “man” to actually contribute to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation. Because revolutionary feminism and womanism are always already epistemically open to the principled contributions of profeminist and prowomanist male theorists-activists, then the question of whether it is possible for a “man” to authentically contribute to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation is circumvented at the outset for the sake of revolutionizing women, female-male relationships, *and* bringing into being a truly decolonized and postpatriarchal society, politics, culture, and world.

Connected to the question of whether it is possible for a “man” to authentically contribute to women’s decolonization and women’s liberation is the question of whether Fanon, once all the smoke has cleared and all the dust has settled, and once we have critically worked through his psychosociopolitical existential phenomenology of race; his concept of racial colonialism; his discourse on revolutionary decolonization; his views on revolutionary violence; his ruminations on revolutionary re-Africanization;

his critique(s) of capitalism; his modification(s) of Marxism; and, his contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation—after working through all of this it is important for us to come to terms with the ways in which Fanon's thought and texts ultimately dialectically deconstruct and reconstruct the meaning of both "revolution" (or, rather, "revolutionary") and "humanism." Questions such as "what is revolution, and what does it mean to be a revolutionary in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth?" and, even more, "what does it mean to be human and practice humanism on the wretched of the earth's anti-imperialist terms?" are at the core of Fanon's corpus. Though often only hinted at by contemporary Fanonists, the following and final "form" of Fanonism discussed here, "Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism," turns our attention to, arguably, the major motif of Fanon's lifework and one of the main reasons his insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy remains relevant: his unrepentant revolutionary humanism—hence, *toward a reconstruction of revolutionary humanist Fanonism*.

## NOTES

1. It should be stated at the outset, it is not the intention of this "form" of Fanonism to argue whether Fanon was a "womanist" or a "feminist"—two terms, it should be pointed out, that were not *en vogue* in Africana intellectual arenas until well after his death in 1961. The primary purpose here is to discover what implications Fanon's pro-womanist and pro-feminist fragments have for the discourse and development of an antiracist, antisexist, anticapitalist, and anticolonialist critical theory of contemporary society—what I am currently calling *Africana critical theory*. Therefore, this "form" of Fanonism, "Feminist Fanonism," as well as this study in general, draws from the women's decolonization and women's liberation theory of a wide range of continental and diasporan African women and men who self-describe and self-define themselves as: "womanists," "Africana womanists," "black feminists," and "African feminists," among other nomenclature (see Allan, 1995; Awkward, 2000; Bambara, 1970; Bobo, 1995, 2001; W. Breines, 2006; Busby, 1992; K. G. Cannon, 1988, 1995; B. Christian, 1985, 1989, 1994; P. H. Collins, 1986a, 1986b, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006; A. Y. Davis, 1981, 1989, 1998b; Dill, 1979, 1983; Dove, 1998a, 1998b; Floyd-Thomas, 2006a, 2006b; Guy-Sheftall, 1990, 1995; hooks, 1981, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1996a, 2000b, 2000c, 2003b, 2006, 2008; Houston and Idriss, 2002; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000, 2004, 2007; Hull, Scott, and Smith, 1982; J. A. James, 1996, 1997, 1999; J. James and Busia, 1993; J. James and Sharpley-Whiting, 2000; Lorde, 1984, 1988, 1996, 2004; Nnaemeka, 1998; Phillips, 2006; Riggs, 1994; Sharpley-Whiting, 2002; B. Smith, 1983, 1998; Terborg-Penn, Harley, and Rushing, 1987; S. Williams, 1990; Zack, 1997, 2000; Zack, Shrage, and Sartwell, 1998).

2. I write of Fanon's (1967) "Freudian slips" even as I acknowledge and agree with him when and where he declared, "The discoveries of Freud are of no use to us

here" (p. 104). He went further to state: "There has been much talk of psychoanalysis in connection with the Negro. Disturbing the ways in which it might be applied, I have preferred to call this chapter [of *Black Skin, White Masks*] 'The Negro and Psychopathology,' well aware that Freud and Adler and even the cosmic Jung did not think of the Negro in all their investigations. And they were quite right not to have. It is too often forgotten that neurosis is not a basic element of human reality" (p. 151). What is most important for us to bear in mind here is that Fanon, as with so many other aspects of his radical politics and critical social theory (e.g., his coquetry with phenomenology, existentialism, and Marxism) simultaneously and dialectically embraced *and* rejected what he understood to be the progressive *and* retrogressive aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis. Hence, Fanon did not repudiate each and every element of the Freudian method. He simply contended that Freud, Jung, and Adler, among others of their ilk, did not develop their psychoanalytic theories with blacks enduring the violence, oppression, and exploitation of a white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world in mind (Sullivan, 2005). Although I am well aware of the fact that Fuss (1995) and McCulloch (1983a) have critically contended that Fanon "inherited" (Fuss's phrase) much from Freud, I am more inclined to agree with Camara Harrell in *Manichean Psychology: Racism and the Minds of People of African Descent* (1999) and Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan in *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (1985), especially when the latter comments on Fanon's dialectical and distinctly black radical approach to Freudian psychoanalytic concepts. Bulhan (1985) revealingly wrote, "It would be misleading to conclude . . . that Fanon embraced psychoanalytic theory, which of course had very formative influence on his thinking. But, even more misleading would be the suggestion that Freud's and Fanon's interests in aggression and sexuality derived from identical social and personal sources. Freud's theorizing emerged out of a nuclear, patriarchal, and bourgeois family context and within a sexually repressive Victorian Europe. Although he challenged the Victorian mores of his day, Freud was essentially an apologist for the *status quo* within the bourgeois family and the larger capitalist society. Reflecting his elitist mentality and class assimilation, Freud claimed that 'those patients who do not possess a reasonable degree of education and a fairly reliable character should be refused' for psychoanalytic treatment. He later added with satisfaction that 'precisely the most valuable and most highly developed persons are best suited for this procedure'" (p. 71; see also Fromm, 1941, 1955, 1959, 1962, 1970, 1973, 1980, 1993; Marcuse, 1966). Bulhan correctly contends that Freud and Fanon developed their theories, psychoanalytic and otherwise, in distinctly disparate social, political, and cultural contexts, and that Freud's milieu was "a nuclear, patriarchal, and bourgeois family context," as well as "a sexually repressive Victorian Europe." What, then, was Fanon's social, political, and cultural context? Bulhan (1985), again, offers an acute answer: "Fanon, on the other hand, was not a member of the ruling bourgeoisie or of the white race. Coming as he did out of a totally colonized island in the Caribbean, he had a firsthand knowledge of what it meant to be black and downtrodden. He observed how the search for recognition in a racist milieu was easily perverted to a consuming desire for 'lactification' [read: whitening and/or lightening], sometimes by means of an interracial marriage. He was a veteran of World War II who, having directly witnessed the horrors of war and torture, later gave himself uncompromisingly to a liberation struggle by the oppressed" (p.

71). We witness here, then, precisely what Fanon (1967) meant when he wrote, "There is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white man to that of the black" (p. 151; see also Bursleson, 2005; Dalal, 2002; Khanna, 2003; R. Keller, 2007; C. Lane, 1998; Parin, 1980; Sachs, 1937, 1947; Said, 2004a). We may consequently conclude with Bulhan (1985) that it is, therefore, "hardly surprising that Freud and Fanon were worlds apart in the ideological thrusts of their psychological formulations and social praxis, as they differed in their views of culture and human nature" (p. 71). This is an extremely important point that should be incessantly held in mind when and where Fanon, or any other Africana intellectual-activist, is approached or, rather, reproached from theoretical perspectives exterior to, and/or which emerged from outside of the orbits of Africana lived-experiences, Africana intellectual history, and the Africana world of ideas (and actions). Another important issue that should be emphasized here is that Fanon's contention that "there is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white man to that of the black [man]" needs to be further interrogated when we turn to the life-worlds and life-struggles of black women. A black feminist and womanist revision of Fanon's contention is needed here, one that essentially extends and expands his critique to include black women. Hence, a similar point could (and *should*) be made regarding the application of Freudian, among other Eurocentric forms of psychology and psychoanalysis to black and other nonwhite women, *the wretched women of the earth* (Burack, 2004; Quashie, 2004; Tate, 1998). The revision of Fanon's contention should read as follows: "There is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white man to that of the black [woman]." What is more, there is a growing body of literature that reveals that an alternate critical revision is also needed when we come to the long-standing practice where psychological and psychoanalytic theory created with white women's life-worlds and life-struggles in mind is uncritically and carelessly applied to black and other non-white women (Abel, Christian, and Moglen, 1997; Pellegrini, 1996; J. Walton, 2001). Therefore, a tertiary critical revision of Fanon's contention should read: "There is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white [woman] to that of the black [woman/nonwhite woman]." Each of the aforementioned issues will be critically engaged throughout the present "form" of Fanonism.

3. For critical treatments of male-feminism, and black male-feminism and/or black male-womanism in particular, see R. Adams and Savran (2002); Adu-Poku (2001); Awkward (1995, 2000); Barz (1991); Brod (1987); Brod and Kaufman (1994); Buchbinder (1994); Byrd and Guy-Sheftall (2001); Carbado (1999); H. Christian (1994); Dench (1996); Digby (1998); Douglass (1992); T. C. Edwards (1994); H. Franks (1984); Gardiner (2002); Gilmore (1990); Goldrick-Jones (2002); hooks (2004a, 2004b); Jardine and Smith (1987); Kiberd (1985); Kimmel (1987, 1995, 2004a, 2004b, 2006); Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell (2005); Kimmel and Mosmiller (1992); Lemons (1997, 2001); May, Strikwerda, and Hopkins (1996); P. Murphy (2004); Mutua (2006); M. A. Neal (2005); D. Porter (1992); Rabaka (2003b, 2004, 2007b, 2009); Rowan (1987); Schacht (2004); Schacht and Ewing (1998); Seidler (1991); Spender (1981); Sterba (2000); Stoltenberg (1993); and Whitehead and Barrett (2001).

4. For further discussion of "revolutionary" and/or "radical" feminism, please see M. F. Beal (1976); D. J. Brown (2000); Crow (2000); Daly (1990); A. Y. Davis



(1981, 1989, 1998b); Donovan (2000); Echols (1989); Guy-Sheftall (1995); hooks (1981, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994b, 1995, 2006); Hull, Scott, and Smith (1982); J. A. James (1996, 1997, 1999); P. Johnson (1994); Koedt (1973); Lorde (1984, 1988, 1996, 2004); Miriam (1997); Radical Women (2001); Rhodes (2005); Rowbotham (1992); Sayers and Osbourne (1990); D. Thompson (2001); Valk (2008); Weiler (2001); and Winslow (1978).

5. With regard to Fanon being fluent only in French, even though he was waging revolution in Algeria, where most of the population at the time spoke Arabic or one of the Berber languages, David Macey (2000) wrote: "Not the least of his [Fanon's] difficulties was that he spoke neither Arabic nor any of the Berber languages spoken in Algeria, and therefore had to work through interpreters. . . . In 1956, Fanon did begin to study Arabic by taking daily fifteen-minute lessons from a local musician, but he still had to rely on whoever was at hand to translate for him. The interpreter was at best a nurse or orderly; at worst, another patient had to be pressed into service" (p. 230). Irene Gendzier (1973) corroborates Macey's claims, writing: "Nurses were useful in communicating with patients, in translating Arabic and Kabyle into French, which few of the European staff [at the Blida-Joinville hospital] could do. This was a problem which troubled Fanon greatly and he sought to remedy it by learning Arabic. The effort was stillborn, but he did not fail to recognize the effect of language on the therapeutic situation" (p. 77). For further discussion of language, literacy, and cultural linguistics in Algeria, please see Berger (2002), Dunwoodie (1998), Kaye (1990), and Merolla (1996).

6. For further discussion of the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics, black linguistics, and Ebonics, especially as they concern black radical politics, critical social theory, and critical pedagogy, please see Alexandre (1972); M. Andrews (1973); Asante (2005a); Dillard (1975); L. J. Green (2002); W. S. Hall (1975); Haskins (1993); J. E. Holloway (1991, 1997); Kautzsch (2002); Labov (1972); Lanehart (2001); Makoni (2003); Mawasha (1982); Mazrui (1975, 1998); Poplack (2000, 2001); Rickford (1987, 1999, 2000); Rickford, Mufwene, Bailey, and Baugh (1998); Smitherman (1975, 1986, 2000); Sutcliffe and Wong (1986); and Wolfram (2002).

7. I, of course, borrow the phrase "the weapon of theory" from Amílcar Cabral's Africana intellectual history-making position paper variously titled "The Weapon of Theory" (in *Revolution in Guinea* [1972, pp. 90–111]) and "The Presuppositions and Objectives of National Liberation in Relation to Social Structure" (in *Unity and Struggle* [1979, pp. 119–137]). In this important paper Cabral (1979) identified two specific forms of colonialism:

1. Direct domination—by means of a political power made up of agents foreign to the dominated people (armed forces, police, administrative agents and settlers)—which is conventionally called *classical colonialism* or *colonialism*.
2. Indirect domination—by means of political power made up mainly or completely of native agents—which is conventionally called *neocolonialism*. (p. 128, all emphasis in original)

According to Cabral, when and where direct domination or classical colonialism is the issue, then the social structure of the dominated people, at whatever stage in

their historical and cultural development, are more than likely to suffer the following experiences:

- (a) Total destruction, generally accompanied by immediate or gradual elimination of the aboriginal population and consequent replacement by an exotic population.
- (b) Partial destruction, generally accompanied by more or less intensive settlement by an exotic population.
- (c) Ostensible preservation, brought about by confining the aboriginal society to areas or special reserves generally offering no means of living and accompanied by massive implantation of an exotic population. (p. 128)

Cabral's work is extremely important with regard to the discussion at hand, and Africana critical theory in general, insofar as his theory stands in contradistinction to Eurocentric and/or Frankfurt School critical theory. Cabral's critical theory seeks to describe, criticize, and offer alternatives to *imperialism as a world-system*, and not merely engage an aspect of imperialism, such as capitalism—though, his critical theory does acknowledge that capitalism is an indelible part of (post)modern, world-historical (neo)imperialism. Colonialism and capitalism are two sides of the same coin, and Africana critical theorists, among others, constantly struggle to radically alter the world, and their specific life-worlds, based upon this crucial comprehension. Africana critical theory deconstructs and deviates from European and European American critical theory insofar as European and European American critical theory are, and have consistently shown themselves to be, concerned almost exclusively with the "socio-historical transformation and the transition from one stage of capitalist development to another" (Kellner, 1989, p. 51; see also Wilkerson and Paris, 2001). European and European American critical theory are purportedly "motivated by an interest in relating theory to politics and an interest in the emancipation of those who are oppressed and dominated" (p. 1), yet it does not offer a single "concrete" alternative and/or salvageable solution to what has been variously dubbed by Africana critical theorists—and Du Bois (1985, p. 235) and Fanon (1968, p. 40) in particular—"the colonial problem." For further discussion of Cabral and Africana critical theory, see my chapter entitled "Amilcar Cabral: Using the Weapon of Theory to Return to the Source(s) of Revolutionary Decolonization and Revolutionary Re-Africanization" in Rabaka (2009, pp. 227–284).

8. In terms of "revolutionary feminist and womanist hermeneutics," I am primarily drawing from work that falls within the category of what is currently being called "feminist cultural hermeneutics"; please see Afsaruddin (1999), Kanyoro (2002), and Webb (2001).

9. My interpretation of Algerian women's life-worlds and lived-experiences before, during, and after French racial colonialism, which is to say, my interpretation of Algerian women's precolonial, colonial, and neocolonial *herstory*, has been indelibly informed and influenced by: Badran and Cooke (2004), Bowen (2008), Charrad (2001), J. F. Fraser (2005), Hessini (1996), S. Joseph and Slyomovics (2000), Khanna (2008), Knauss (1987), Kopola (2001), Lazreg (1994), Mernissi (1987, 1991, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995, 1996), Messaoudi (1998), Orlando (1999, 2002), Parveen (1986), Pears (2004), Shirazi (2001), and Zayzafoon (2005).

10. For the works which have informed my analysis here, and for further discussion of the ways in which the French used their universities and social scientists in the interest of imperialism in Africa, and particularly the racialization and colonization of Algeria, please see Adamson (2002), Alloula (1986), Bullock (2002), Goutor (1965), Khanna (2008), Knauss (1987), Kopola (2001), Lorcin (1995, 2006), Mernissi (1987, 1991), Messaoudi (1998), Naylor (2000), Pickles (1963), J. W. Scott (2007), Silverstein (2004), Talbot (1980), D. Thomas (2002, 2006), Tillion (1961), Vidal-Naquet (1963), and Worsfold (1930).

11. Cabral (1979) emphasized the elasticity and durability of culture even in the face of racial colonialism, writing: "One of the most serious mistakes, if not the most serious mistake, made by the colonial powers in Africa, may have been to ignore or underestimate the cultural strength of African peoples. This attitude is particularly clear in the case of Portuguese colonial domination, which was not content with denying absolutely the existence of cultural values of the African and his condition as a social being, but has persisted in forbidding him any kind of political activity" (pp. 147–148). The racial colonizers confused *repression* with *destruction*. To repress the racially colonized peoples' culture is not to destroy their culture; it is quite simply, among other things, an attempt to denounce, denude, and degrade it. But, denying something or, even more, distorting something does not destroy it, it merely means that one has chosen, perhaps, to ignore or negatively characterize an actually existing, concrete fact or form or force. However, in response to this conundrum, Cabral contended that the capacity for "cultural resistance" by African (and other racially colonized) people "was not destroyed" (p. 148). On the contrary, "African culture, though repressed, persecuted and betrayed by some social categories [or social classes] who compromised with colonialism, survived all the storms, by taking refuge in the villages, in the forests and in the spirit of generations of victims of colonialism" (p. 148). Cabral's comments here are applicable to the life-worlds and life-struggles of Algerian women insofar as, first, Algerian women, long before French colonialism, had been "betrayed by some social categories [i.e., most Algerian men]" who, during the French occupation of Algeria, "had compromised" not so much with French colonialism, but with patriarchal colonialism, with the colonization of Algerian women's life-worlds and lived-experiences. Second, when Cabral contends that "African culture, though repressed, persecuted and betrayed by some social categories who compromised with colonialism, survived all the storms, by taking refuge in the villages, in the forests and in the spirit of generations of victims of colonialism," it could be averred that Algerian women's unique *herstory* and culture "survived" the colonialisms of both white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalists (both male and female), as well as the preexisting precolonial patriarchal colonialism of hyper-religious hypocritical Algerian men. And, finally, Cabral's deeply dialectical critical theory helps to highlight the fact that precolonial forms of colonialism existed in Africa, and that part of what European imperialism did was mischievously exacerbate and perpetuate preexisting conflicts and contradictions in Africa, as well as superimpose its own atrocious forms of racial colonialism, racial capitalism, and racial sexism on Africa.

12. My interpretation of poststructural and postmodern feminism has been influenced and informed by Benstock, Ferriss, and Woods (2002), A. Brooks (1997),

Ebert (1996), Ferguson and Wickle (1994), S. Gamble (2002), Marchand and Parpart (1995), Nicholson (1990), St. Pierre and Pillow (2000), Weedon (1996), and Zalewski (2000).

13. The antisexist sentiments expressed here have been indelibly influenced by the sources cited in endnote 3.

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## Revolutionary Humanist Fanonism

### Toward the Africana Revolution, toward Relieving the Wretched of the Earth, and toward Redeeming the Racial Colonial Patriarchal Capitalists' Long-Lost Humanity

Fanon's philosophy can be summarized by a single conviction: Maturity is fundamental to the human condition, but one cannot achieve maturity without being *actional*, which, for Fanon, is tantamount to freedom. . . . Having built his thought on the importance of seizing one's freedom and taking responsibility for one's values, Fanon is careful to raise the question of *how* a transition could be made from neocolonialism to a genuine *postcolonialism*.

—Lewis Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence:  
Living Thought in Trying Times* (p.89)

[L]iberation of the Damned of the Earth presupposes suppression not only of their old, but also of their new masters. . . . I believe that there is a "natural right" of resistance for oppressed and overpowered minorities to use extralegal means if the legal ones have proved to be inadequate. . . . If they use violence, they do not start a new chain of violence but try to break an established one. Since they will be punished, they know the risk, and when they are willing to take it, no third person, and least of all the educator and intellectual, has the right to preach them abstention.

—Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance" (pp. 110, 116–117)

He who glorifies theory and genius but fails to recognize the *limits* of a theoretical work, fails likewise to recognize the *indispensability* of the

*theoretician*. All of history is the history of the struggle for freedom. If, as a theoretician, one's ears are attuned to the new impulse from the workers, new "categories" will be created, a new way of thinking, a new step forward in philosophic cognition.

—Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 until Today* (p. 89)

I, the man of color, want only this: That the tool never possess the man. That the enslavement of man by man cease forever. That is, of one by another. That it be possible for me to discover and to love man, wherever he may be. . . .

I will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (pp. 231, 98)

### FANON'S RUMINATIONS ON REVOLUTIONARY HUMANISM, OR RUMINATIONS ON REVOLUTIONARY HUMANIST FANONISM

It could be easily averred that one of if not "the" leitmotif of Fanon's oeuvre remains his unrepentant revolutionary humanism. As we witnessed with his concept of revolutionary decolonization, Fanon sought to deconstruct and reconstruct "humanism" in the anti-imperialist interests of the wretched of the earth. Although much has been made of his views on revolutionary violence, when all the smoke clears and all the dust settles, it is Fanon's humanism—that is, his decidedly *revolutionary* humanism—on which his critical theoretical and radical political legacy hinges.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the foregoing "forms" of Fanonism, I have repeatedly hinted at Fanon's distinct humanism; consequently, here I should like to conclude by elucidating exactly *what* I have been referring to as Fanon's "revolutionary humanism" and *why* it remains relevant for those of us who are deeply concerned about, and deeply committed to the dialectical deconstruction and reconstruction of contemporary Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory. At first issue is the explication of the terms "revolutionary" and "humanism." Secondly, an examination of how Fanon's humanism deviates from "conventional" (read: racial colonial patriarchal capitalist) conceptions of humanism is required. Then, finally, it will be important to develop a discourse on the ways in which Fanon's revolutionary humanism is inextricable from his various critical theories of revolutionary decolonization, which, as we have seen, intensely accent the antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist dimensions of "true" decolonization.

**FANON'S CRITICAL THEORY OF REVOLUTIONARY  
HUMANISM: RADICALLY (RE)DEFINING "REVOLUTION(ARY)"  
AND "HUMANISM" IN THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST INTERESTS  
OF THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH**

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon wrote of revolutionary decolonization bringing a "new humanity" into being, where in *Black Skin, White Masks* and *Toward the African Revolution* he wrote more directly of a "new humanism" (Fanon, 1967, p. 7; 1968, p. 36; 1969, p. 126). He was neither a stubborn, starry-eyed utopian socialist nor a naïve, narrow-minded African nationalist seeking to return to Mau Mau's "terror-tactics" to rid Algeria, and Africa as a whole, of its racial colonizers (Alam, 2007; Clayton, 2006; Clough, 1998; Njeng'ere, 2003; Odhiambo and Lonsdale, 2003). There is a discursively deeper and, perhaps, more moral dimension to Fanon's critical theory of white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism. It has been often overlooked, or reviled when and where, on very rare occasions, it has been acknowledged.

Many critics have approached or, rather, reproached Fanon's conception of revolution from Eurocentric frames of reference, which represents, it should be underscored, their first major mistake. There is neither consensus on exactly what revolution is, nor on what its outcome(s) should be (Arendt, 1965; Brinton, 1965; Cahoon, 2005; DeFronzo, 2007; Goldstone, 1993, 2003; Mason, 2004; Skocpol, 1979). Were we to examine revolutions from a general historical point of view, then, one of the first conclusions we would be forced to come to is that revolutions are fundamentally particular and peculiar to the specific people or parties who envision and undertake them. Therefore, revolutions are extremely difficult to concretely define because definitions are in and of themselves usually obtained by inferences and abstractions or, at best, generalizations, whereas revolutions, "real" revolutions greatly vary in their aims and objectives, in their complexity and context(s), as well as in their historical and existential-phenomenological terms and conditions. What is most often omitted from Eurocentric interpretations of the wretched of the earth's theories and praxes of revolution are intimate and insightful understandings of the historical and cultural as well as the social and political contexts and conditions which gave rise, first and foremost, to their wretchedness, that is, to their pauperization, and, secondly, to their critical consciousness and conclusion of *antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist revolution* as the only authentic solution(s) to their problem(s) (see Chaliand, 1989; de Soto, 1989; Hahn and Heiss, 2001; San Juan, 1988, 1994; Schutz and Slater, 1990).

For Fanon, a revolution is a process of *self* and *social transformation*, of "true" decolonization and "true" liberation. In order for the racially colonized to

truly transform themselves and their societies they need an alternative value-system and alternative models and modes of existence that not only call into question white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist culture and "civilization," but that also combat their continued, overt and covert, racialization and colonization. This, of course, is where and why Césaire's concept of critical "return" had such a profound impact on Fanon, because he, Fanon, pointed out that once the racially colonized decide to break with racial colonial patriarchal capitalism, they must return to, or, rather, reconvene their relationship(s) with their indigenous history and culture (Fanon, 1968, pp. 206–248). Both Fanon and Cabral emphasized, though, that as the racially colonized reconvene their relationship(s) with their traditional history and culture, they must selectively salvage only those things which will enable them to deconstruct imperialism and reconstruct a "new humanity" and an anti-imperialist world (i.e., a post-white supremacist, postpatriarchal, postcolonialist, and postcapitalist democratic socialist world). This, then, is what we may take Fanon to mean by "revolution."

With regard to "humanism," Fanon's conception is distinct in that it seeks to simultaneously demonstrate that when and where whites have spoken or written of humanism it has been almost always predicated on the diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black inferiority. In other words, "humanism," as postulated and projected by most whites, in both the modern and postmodern moments, has consistently been an ideological ruse, a psychotic, sycophantic subterfuge intended to trick uninitiated whites into embracing the triumph of their whiteness, and already angst-ridden nonwhites into accepting the tragedy of their nonwhiteness in a white supremacist world (Du Bois, 1945, 1985, 1999; Goldberg, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2008; Goldberg and Quayson, 1999; Goldberg and Solomos, 2002; Gordon, 1995a, 1996a, 1997b, 1998a, 2002, 2006a, 2006g; C. W. Mills, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003a, 2003b; Rabaka, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b). Fanon's humanism critically compared and contrasted Eurocentric humanism with authentic humanism, that is to say, with unmitigated universalist humanism. His "new humanism" was "new" in light of the fact that it transcended and transgressed the borders and boundaries or, more precisely, the conflicted color-lines and yawning racial colonial chasms of Eurocentric humanism and extended the hallowed hallmarks of genuine humanism to the wretched of the earth, to the racially colonized, to the nonwhite "native" subhuman "things." His "new humanism" was also "new" on account of the fact that he connected and combined his humanism with his critical theory and critical praxis of revolutionary decolonization, which is to say, with his compassionate commitments to *antiracist*, *antisexist*, *anticolonialist*, and *anticapitalist* revolution.



**FANON'S CRITICAL THEORY OF WHITE SUPREMACIST  
PATRIARCHAL COLONIAL CAPITALIST HUMANISM: TOWARD A  
FANONIAN-SARTREAN-MARCUSEAN DIALECTICAL CRITIQUE  
OF "REVOLUTION," "HUMANISM," AND "VIOLENCE" IN THE  
ANTI-IMPERIALIST INTERESTS  
OF THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH**

Frequently Fanon's revolutionary humanism has been hard to detect because of the brouhaha surrounding his views on revolutionary violence. Questions concerning whether he can really and truly be considered a humanist in light of his views on violence are often advanced to quickly quell or, at the least, cursorily curtail critical engagements of his humanism. It should be openly admitted at the outset: Fanon's humanism was, indeed, very different from the accepted forms of "humanism" put forward by the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalists in so far as Fanon's humanism was not a Eurocentric, procolonial, bourgeois male supremacist "humanism." Which is to say that Fanon's humanism did not begin and end with wealthy white men and their kith and kin (which, of course, in most instances included/includes white women), but with the wretched of the earth. His humanism, therefore, cannot or, rather, should not be gauged or engaged employing white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalists' conceptions of humanism, but should be approached from the position(s) of the wretched of the earth and their racially colonized life-worlds and life-struggles (A. Daniels, 2001; Gueddi, 1991; Makuru, 2005; Osei-Nyame, 2002; Pithouse, 2003).

What is most often missing from the harangues about Fanon's views on violence are any serious discussions of *how* and *why* he advocated *self-defensive antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist violence*. No mention is made of the interminable imperialist violence that the wretched of the earth have been barbarically forced to endure at the hands of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. No mention is made of the holocausts, genocides, enslavements, racializations, colonizations, segregations, pogroms, and lynchings that the wretched of the earth have long had to live and labor through. No mention is made of the many millions of ways in which the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalists have repeatedly robbed the wretched of the earth of their human rights, civil rights, voting rights, and any other kind of "rights." This is all brushed aside with a subtle and brisk brutality which has caused a couple of European critical theorists with serious social consciences to question the ways in which Europe has narcissistically and racistly quarantined "humanism" to include "whites only" and "nonviolence" to involve "nonwhites only." For instance, in his classic essay, "Socialist Humanism?," Herbert Marcuse (1965c) sternly

stated that “there is no choice between violence and nonviolence, but only between two modes of violence—capitalist and socialist” (p. 107; see also Eidelberg, 1969). In another classic essay, “Repressive Tolerance,” Marcuse (1965a) directly quoted Fanon and undauntedly displayed Fanon’s influence on his radical politics and critical social theory, declaring:

Even in the advanced centers of civilization, violence actually prevails: it is practiced by the police, in the prisons and mental institutions, in the fight against racial minorities; it is carried, by the defenders of metropolitan freedom, into the backward countries. This violence, indeed, breeds violence. But, to refrain from violence in the face of vastly superior violence is one thing, to renounce *a priori* violence against violence, on ethical or psychological grounds (because it may antagonize sympathizers) is another. Non-violence is normally not only preached to but exacted from the weak—it is a necessity rather than a virtue, and normally it does not seriously harm the case of the strong. . . . In terms of historical function, there is a difference between revolutionary and reactionary violence, between violence practiced by the oppressed and by the oppressors. In terms of ethics, both forms of violence are inhuman and evil—but since when is history made in accordance with ethical standards? To start applying them at the point where the oppressed rebel against the oppressors, the have-nots against the haves is serving the cause of actual violence by weakening the protest against it. (pp. 102–103; see also Marcuse, 1969a, 1972a, 1976c)

Marcuse’s views on violence, and in particular, the crucial distinction he makes between “revolutionary and reactionary violence, between violence practiced by the oppressed and by the oppressors,” goes far to indicate precisely why I have placed his conception of “socialist humanism” into critical dialogue with Fanon’s revolutionary humanism. It is important here to not simply construct a casual intellectual exchange between Fanon and Marcuse, which is to say between Africana critical theory and Frankfurt School critical theory, but instead to bring the dialectic to bear on, and astutely identify critical theoretical convergences of shared and, even more, often coextensive concerns, contentions, and conundrums between Fanon and Marcuse—that is, again, between Africana critical theory and Frankfurt School critical theory. Rarely, if ever, has Marcuse been condemned as “the apostle of violence” or “the prophet of violence” as with Fanon. In the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, although he shares very similar sentiments with Fanon concerning revolutionary violence and the “right of resistance” on the part of the wretched of the earth, Marcuse’s views on violence are seen as “rational” and, most certainly, more “reasonable,” where Fanon’s advocations are seen as vulgarly “reactionary,” ethically “reprehensible,” and morally “repugnant.”<sup>2</sup>

The point that I wish to make here is not that violence, any form of violence, should be, in principle, employed in the wretched of the earth’s

efforts to transform themselves and the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, but that, even within the discourse(s) on "humanism," it would seem that the wretched of the earth remain racialized and colonized, yet and still those nonwhite "native" subhuman "things" I have discussed throughout this study. How, we may ask, can there be a double-standard in the discourse(s) on "humanism"? Are whites really discussing "humanism" if any part of humanity is racially segregated within the discourse? Can they not see that what they are actually discussing is *white supremacist humanism*—a duplicitous "humanism" that is predicated on the supposed superiority and the actual incessant celebration of white "human beings" in comparison with nonwhite "native," non-human "things"? Whites have, time and time again, used violence to defend their human rights and human dignity, which begs the question: why is violence, albeit *self-defensive antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist violence*, outlawed when and where we come to the struggle(s) of the wretched of the earth in their quests to rescue and reclaim their long-denied human rights and human dignity? My conscience compels me to raise a corollary critical question here as well: why, also, is violence—again, albeit *self-defensive antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist violence*—rendered taboo on the part of the wretched of the earth in their decolonization and liberation struggles when: first, the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalists have consistently utilized every fathomable form of violence known to humankind to perpetually and psychopathologically racialize, colonialize, and capitalize the wretched of the earth, and when, secondly, the wretched of the earth have come to the angst-filled conclusion that their nonviolent liberation struggle strategies are not in the present and historically have never proven effective in their anti-imperialist endeavors to simultaneously and dialectically critically "return" to their distinct histories and cultures and, ultimately, deal imperialism a death-blow? Seeming to continue his critical dialogue with Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization and to speak directly to this conundrum, Marcuse (1970a), in "The Problem of Violence and the Radical Opposition," importantly mused:

I should like to say at least a few words about the right of resistance, because I am astonished again and again when I find out how little it has penetrated into people's consciousness that the recognition of the right of resistance, namely civil disobedience, belongs to the oldest and most sanctified elements of Western civilization. The idea that there is a right or law higher than positive law is as old as this civilization itself. Here is the conflict before which every opposition that is more than private is placed. For the establishment has a legal monopoly of violence and the positive right, even the duty, to use this violence in its self-defense. In contrast, the recognition and exercise of a higher right and the duty of resistance, of civil disobedience, is a motive force in the

historical development of freedom, a potentially liberating violence. Without this right of resistance, without activation of a higher law against existing law, we would still be today at the level of the most primitive barbarism. Thus I think that the concept of violence covers two different forms: the institutionalized violence of the established system and the violence of resistance, which is necessarily illegal in relation to positive law. It is meaningless to speak of the legality of resistance: no social system, even the freest, can constitutionally legalize violence directed against itself. Each of these forms has functions that conflict with those of the other. (pp. 89–90)

When Marcuse's remarks are placed into critical dialogue with Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization, a different view, a very different view of violence emerges. It would seem that both agree that there is "the institutionalized violence of the established system," with an emphasis on racial colonial capitalist violence for Fanon and advanced industrial capitalist and Soviet communist violence for Marcuse, and both point to "the violence of resistance" as a "potentially liberating violence." Fanon, therefore, is not alone in identifying "the violence of resistance" as an important alternative to, if not a necessary maneuver in combating the long-standing long-suffering nonviolence of the wretched of the earth. What is even more amazing is that similar to Fanon, Marcuse critiqued a narrow-minded and dogmatic commitment to nonviolence on the part of, or being "preached" to, the oppressed as nothing other than the reproduction of "the institutionalized violence of the established system"—that is, nothing other than the repetitive replication of the wretched of the earth's wretchedness. In his own words:

There is violence of suppression and violence of liberation; there is violence for the defense of life and violence of aggression. And both forms have been and will remain historical forces. So from the start the opposition is placed in the field of violence. Right stands against right, not only as abstract claim but as action. Again the *status quo* has the right to determine the limits of legality. This conflict of the two rights, of the right of resistance with institutionalized violence, brings with it the continual danger of clashing with the violence of the state unless the right of liberation is sacrificed to the right of the established order and unless, as in previous history, the number of victims of the powers that be continues to surpass those of the revolution. That means, however, that preaching non-violence on principle reproduces the existing institutionalized violence. And in monopolistic industrial society this violence is concentrated to an unprecedented extent in the domination that penetrates the totality of society. In relation to this totality the right of liberation is in its immediate appearance a particular right. Thus the conflict of violence appears as a clash between general and particular or public and private violence, and in this clash the private violence will be defeated until it can confront the existing public power as a new general interest. (p. 90)

It would seem that for the established order “anything goes,” absolutely “anything goes” in terms of them maintaining their interlocking systems of violence, exploitation, and oppression. However, when and where we come to the wretched of the earth’s “right of resistance,” they are strongly (i.e., legally and illegally) discouraged from even considering *self-defensive violence* as an option, as a tactic in their quest to decolonize and liberate themselves. Marcuse makes the point that “preaching non-violence on principle” to the wretched of the earth only “reproduces the existing institutionalized violence,” which directly corresponds with Fanon’s (1968) contention that “[t]he colonialist bourgeoisie is helped in its work of calming down the natives by the inevitable religion. All those saints who have turned the other cheek, who have forgiven trespasses against them, and who have been spat on and insulted without shrinking are studied and held up as examples” (p. 67).

What the established order, in their racist irrationality, fails to critically comprehend is that the wretched of the earth no longer respect, if they ever did, the “positive laws,” as Marcuse put it, which ironically are actually the *negative laws*, of the ongoing apartheid of the existing system. They have come to the painful conclusion that “the number of victims of the powers that be continues to surpass those of the [anti-imperialist] revolution,” therefore, an even more intensified *self-defensive antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist violence* is justified from their perspective(s), even though it is not, and is in fact illegal, seditious, and treasonous within the confines of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. We also witness here where and why the wretched of the earth critically “return” to their precolonial and, most especially, their *anticolonial* history and culture, because they have decided “to put an end to the static period begun by colonization, and to make history.” Fanon decidedly declared:

We must also notice in this ripening process the role played by the history of resistance at the time of the conquest. The great figures of the colonized people are always those who led the national resistance to invasion. Behanzin, Soundiata, Samory, Abdel Kader—all spring again to life with peculiar intensity in the period which comes directly before action. This is proof that the people are getting ready to begin to go forward again, to put an end to the static period begun by colonization, and to make history. (p. 69)

We see here, then, that the wretched of the earth are not hell-bent or incorrigible on the utilization of *self-defensive antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist violence*, but that they have come to the painful conclusion that nonviolence is virtually ineffective in light of the new, more intensified but undoubtedly more difficult to detect, forms of (neo)imperialism—which is to say, the incessantly overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting

systems of violence, exploitation, and oppression that we (or, at the least, Africana critical theorists) have come to call "racism," "sexism," "colonialism," and "capitalism."<sup>3</sup> Above, Fanon reminds us once again why it is so important for the wretched of the earth to critically "return" to and resuscitate and reconstruct their relationships with their precolonial and, especially, their anticolonial pasts, their "histor[ies] of resistance," as he put it, because, as Marcuse observed above, "no social system, even the freest, can constitutionally legalize violence directed against itself." This means, then, that the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world (especially its academies and intelligentsia) will not, and should not be expected to provide the wretched of the earth with critical theories and paradigms for revolutionary praxes which will bring about its destruction. However, what it will often wickedly do is provide the wretched of the earth with nonviolent examples of "radicalism" that are, for all intents and purposes, utterly ineffective in terms of really and truly transforming themselves and their respective life-worlds and lived-experiences. It is very often those greatly hated and grossly harassed historical and herstorical figures who espoused *antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist revolution*, and who, consequently, are reproached and reviled most, who are "blacklisted" and excommunicated from the utterly unholy world of white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism that the wretched of the earth critically "return" to in their processes and programs of revolutionary self- and social transformation, of "true" decolonization and "true" liberation.

As the wretched of the earth critically "return" to their "histor[ies] of resistance," they must always and everywhere bear in mind Cabral's (1979) heartfelt caveat that "a people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be culturally free unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures, they return to the upwards paths of their own culture" (p. 143). Throughout the foregoing "forms" of Fanonism, I have generously drawn from the work of several European and European American, among other non-Africana, critical theorists, all the while earnestly attempting to illustrate that Africana critical theory, in its ardent efforts to radically deepen and develop Fanon's critical theory, hinges upon or, rather, *is* an unrepentant revolutionary humanism that takes Cabral's solemn caveat very seriously. Africana critical theory, therefore, does not only advocate that the wretched of the earth critically "return" to their "histor[ies] of resistance," but also that they not be afraid to acknowledge that some of the radical political and critical social theories arising out of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world may, in fact, make their own special contribution to the wretched of the earth's critical theories and revolutionary praxes. Hence, here I am simultaneously saying that it is extremely prudent for the wretched of the earth to harbor a healthy suspicion of European and European American

radical politics and critical social theory that does not openly advocate an antiracist, antisexist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist reconstruction of contemporary culture and society but, in the very same breath, I am also admonishing them to guard against the evils of ethnocentrism, racial essentialism, and intellectual insularity, and always and everywhere remain epistemically open to European and European American radical political and critical social theoretical authentic contributions to the revolutionary humanist deconstruction and reconstruction of contemporary radical politics and critical social theory and, even more, contemporary culture and society. It is with all of this in mind that I turn one last time to Sartre's solemn testimony on behalf of, or, rather, *against* the ways in which the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world employs its faux philosophy of "humanism" as a ruse to perpetuate and exacerbate the wretched of the earth's unrelenting wretchedness and revilement. Sartre (1968) sternly stated:

You know well enough that we are exploiters. You know too that we have laid hands on first gold and metals, then the petroleum of the "new continents," and that we have brought them back to the old countries. This was not without excellent results, as witness our palaces, our cathedrals, and our great industrial cities; and then when there was the threat of a slump, the colonial markets were there to soften the blow or to divert it. Crammed with riches, Europe accorded the human status *de jure* to its inhabitants. With us, to be a man is to be an accomplice of colonialism, since all of us without exception have profited by colonial exploitation. This fat, pale continent ends by falling into what Fanon rightly calls narcissism. Cocteau became irritated with Paris—"that city which talks about itself the whole time." Is Europe any different? And that super-European monstrosity, North America? Chatter, chatter: liberty, equality, fraternity, love, honor, patriotism, and what have you. All this did not prevent us from making anti-racial speeches about dirty niggers, dirty Jews, and dirty Arabs. High-minded people, liberal or just softhearted, protest that they were shocked by such inconsistency; but they were either mistaken or dishonest, for with us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters. While there was a native population somewhere this imposture was not shown up; in the notion of the human race we found an abstract assumption of universality which served as cover for the most realistic practices. (pp. 25–26; see also Champigny, 1972; Law, 2007)

Notice now how Sartre returns to the theme, which, as we have witnessed, he developed in both "Black Orpheus" and *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, of nonwhites being reduced (via white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist racialization and colonization) to "natives," to nature, to savage subhuman "things" in comparison with, and in contrast to the white "lords of creation" and the white "supra-natural being[s]." When he writes, "for

with us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters," we witness, in weighted words, exactly why I have placed so much emphasis on Cabral's caveat about the wretched of the earth remaining radically open to receiving conceptual contributions to their critical theories, as well as anti-imperialist instruments that could aid them in their revolutionary praxes, from "the oppressor's culture and other cultures," as Cabral contended. An additional reason Sartre's work here is distinctive is that he audaciously hits at the heart of Europe's "racist humanism" by critiquing its value-system as one that creates racialized, colonized, and capitalized "slaves and monsters" while simultaneously and surreptitiously making whites, not the white "lords of creation" and white "supra-natural being[s]," as they in their racist irrationality would like to believe, but "the enemies of mankind" whose entire value-system is "stained with blood." Once again Sartre (1968) find his way into the fray:

On the other side of the ocean there was a race of less-than-humans who, thanks to us, might reach our status a thousand years hence, perhaps; in short, we mistook the elite for the genus. Today, the native populations reveal their true nature, and at the same time our exclusive "club" reveals its weakness—that it's neither more nor less than a minority. Worse than that: since the others become men in name against us, it seems that we are the enemies of mankind; the elite shows itself in its true colors—it is nothing more than a gang. Our precious sets of values begin to molt; on closer scrutiny you won't see one that isn't stained with blood. (p. 26)

Europe's bloodstained "values" signify the subtle, albeit omnipresent, violence that malevolently meets nonwhites in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world, and what is interesting to observe about Sartre is that he audaciously, here and elsewhere, engaged questions and concerns that most European and European American intellectuals have frequently either marginalized or completely omitted from their discourse(s) on and answers to what they understand to be the most crucial questions and the most pressing problems confronting humanity (Gordon, 1995a, 2002; Howells, 1992; Judaken, 2006, 2008; J. S. Murphy, 1999, 2002; Sartre, 1965, 1995, 1997). In *Notebooks for an Ethics, Critique of Dialectical Reason (Volumes I and II)*, the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, "The Rome Lecture Notes," *Hope Now: The 1980 Interviews* and *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, Sartre developed a distinct discourse on violence, and particularly with regard to the wretched of the earth's right to self-defensive counterviolence (Sartre, 1964, 1968, 1976, 1992, 1995, 2006; see also Th. C. Anderson, 1993; L. A. Bell, 1989; Busch, 1990; Detmer, 1988; Dobson, 1993; Flynn, 1984, 1997, 2005; Howells, 1992; Jeanson, 1981; McBride, 1991; Santoni, 1995; Stone and Bowman, 1986, 1991; Sze, 2007). In his groundbreaking



study, *Sartre on Violence: Curiously Ambivalent*, the highly respected Sartre scholar Ronald Santoni (2003) makes it a point to emphasize that no matter how profoundly Sartre may have influenced Fanon, which he most certainly did, "Fanon, however, was not an uncritical disciple of Sartre. . . . [I]t is evident that Fanon's thinking also had some impact on Sartre's: this was not a one-way intellectual or ideological street" (pp. 68–69).<sup>4</sup>

As it was during Fanon and Sartre's day, *violence* remains an epochal issue of the greatest importance at the dawn of the twenty-first century. For example, in their age it was the racial colonial capitalist violence in the Congo, Algeria, and Vietnam, among other areas; in the present it is the racial colonial capitalist ethnoreligious violence in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Palestine, Israel, Rwanda, and Sudan, among other areas. What is more, it is the seemingly ever-increasing and excruciatingly intensifying violence of the modern/postmodern and neocolonial/postcolonial world that recurrently raises violence to the level of an issue of epochal importance. This, consequently, leads us to critical questions which have all too often gone both unasked and, therefore, unanswered by the sometimes "liberal," sometimes "politically correct," but seemingly all the time—from the point(s) of view of the wretched of the earth—*white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist intelligentsia*: What is violence? What are the various forces and forms of violence? Does violence have ethical implications? Can it be justified morally? If so, when and where should we place restrictions on the ways in which it can be used ethically as an instrument against imperialism? Is exploitation and oppression always and in every instance a force and/or form of violence? If, indeed, the wretched of the earth follow Fanon, Marcuse, and Sartre's suggestions, are they really and truly morally justified or ethically authorized in using violence—again, self-defensive counterviolence—to rescue and reclaim their racialized, colonized, and long-denied humanity from the gruesome grip of white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist violence. And finally, are the wretched of the earth ethically authorized or morally justified in employing violence in their efforts to rectify and resolve white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist injustices and (re)create what Fanon referred to as a "new humanism" and a "new humanity," not only with regard to the wretched of the earth, but also the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalists?

Here it is hoped that by juxtaposing Fanon's revolutionary humanism with Marcuse's conception of "socialist humanism" and Sartre's critique of Europe's "racist humanism," all of which in one way or another comment on and critique the violence of the established order, it is completely clear how disingenuous it is for Fanon's critics to collapse his revolutionary humanism into his views on revolutionary violence—though I would be the first to admit that they are, in most instances, inextricable when and where we come to his dialectic of "true" decolonization and "true" liberation. It is

wrong, consequently, retrogressively wrong, for Fanon's critics to reproach and revile him for his advocacy of *self-defensive antiracist, anticolonialist, anticapitalist, and antisexist violence* or, worst, the ways in which self-described or faux "Fanonists" have (mis)interpreted his views on violence, while they, Fanon's critics, consciously conceal or intentionally overlook Marcuse's and Sartre's, among many others, very similar views on violence and revolution or, rather, "revolutionary violence," if you will. Along with identifying the diabolical double-standard of Europe's discourse on "humanism," then, here it has also been my intention to emphasize European and European American critical theorists' long-standing double-standard(s) with regard to the incontestable contributions of non-European radicals and revolutionaries to the discourse and development of radical politics and critical social theory. It is with this in mind that I conclude this study by critically examining the ways in which Fanon's revolutionary humanism remains relevant for and helps contemporary critical theorists in their efforts to reconnect an authentic humanism to their disparate projects of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary democratic socialist transformation.

### TOWARD A CRITICAL THEORY OF FAUX FANONISM AND "FALSE DECOLONIZATION": FANON'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM

At the heart of Fanon's praxis-promoting critical theory of revolutionary decolonization is a philosophical anthropology which understands that human beings' fundamental nature, that is, their deepest and most sacred desire, is to be free. Emmanuel Hansen (1977) has asserted that "Fanon regards freedom as man's supreme goal. And, the whole purpose of man's existence is to realize this supreme goal" (p. 62). Revolutionary decolonization, then, is not and should not be equated with "violence for violence's sake," but, quite the converse, it is *self-defensive violence for life and liberation's sake*, which is to say, *self-defensive violence for freedom's sake*.<sup>5</sup> The ultimate objective of the self-defensive counterviolence of the racially colonized is to bring the racial colonial system, the racial colonial regime, the entire white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world to its knees, and then amputate both its legs so that it will never walk (on or over the corpses of the racially colonized or anyone else) again. At the heart of Fanon's critical theory is fundamentally a philosophy of freedom, a "revolutionary humanism," if you will, and, as Hansen noted above, it is specifically to this "supreme goal," freedom, that Fanon felt human beings' entire existence revolved around and gravitated toward. Here, then, in this concluding section we will engage and explore Fanon's philosophical anthropology and

the end towards which he defends and explicates the methods and means of revolutionary decolonization (and all that it elicits): his concept of human freedom.

*Black Skin, White Masks*, more so than any of Fanon's other works, reveals a great deal about his philosophical anthropology, that is, his view(s) concerning the essence of human nature, without regard to race, culture, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, social status, or class position. For Fanon, the quest for freedom is the essential element that binds one human being to another human being, or one human group to another human group, and it is this principle in particular that distinguishes and defines human beings *qua* human beings. Fanon envisioned a world where human beings behaved as *humane* beings, that is, as civil and sincere, loving, kind, compassionate, and caring individuals who detested, despised, denounced, and were ultimately willing to destroy, if need be, anyone (or anything) who (or that) denied another what was most human in them: their right to self-determination and to develop to their fullest potential (Davids, 1996; Roberts, 2004; C. Wright, 1992).<sup>6</sup>

*Black Skin, White Masks* was written as a rejoinder to the question "What does man want?" And, more specifically, "What does the black man [i.e., racially colonized humanity] want?" (Fanon, 1967, p. 8). By the conclusion of the book, the reader has a concrete idea of what human beings want, or, at the least, from the Fanonian perspective, what they should want, and especially racially colonized humanity. Fanon decidedly declared:

I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone:  
That of demanding human behavior from the other.

One duty alone: That of not renouncing my freedom through my choices.

...

No attempt must be made to encase man, for it is his destiny to be set free.

...

I, the man of color, want only this: That the tool never possess the man.  
That the enslavement of man by man cease forever. That is, of one by another.  
That it be possible for me to discover and to love man, wherever he may be.  
(pp. 229–231)

In the event that a human being, or a human group, denies the quintessential right, that of freedom, to any other human being or human group, Fanon argued that the offended party is morally justified in "demanding human behavior from the other."<sup>7</sup> Although it took him several years to come to the precise nature the "demand" should take, ultimately revolutionary decolonization was Fanon's response to the conundrum(s)—that is, the violence, exploitation, and oppression—of white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism. His philosophical anthropology supports what he conceived of as "the" ultimate objective, and understood to be

the "supreme goal" of human existence: total, complete, and/or absolute liberation, "true" liberation. Any attempt to "encase" or "enslave" human beings was, for Fanon, a negation of their humanity, their *human-being-in-the-world* as free agents, and/or their ability to choose or not choose as they please. To deny human beings their agency is to obfuscate, if not literally obliterate, their dignity and, therefore, their identity. On the obfuscation and eventual obliteration of the dignity and identity of racially colonized peoples, Fanon, in "The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples," revealingly remarked:

[I]f at a certain stage he [the racially colonized] has been led to ask himself whether he is indeed a man [i.e., a human being], it is because his reality as a man has been challenged. In other words, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world, "that I am a brute beast, that my people and I are like a walking dung-heap that disgustingly fertilizes sweet sugar cane and silky cotton, that I have no use in the world." Then I will quite simply try to make myself white: that is, I will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human. (p. 98)<sup>8</sup>

Racial colonialism, at minimum, corrodes the dignity and identity of the racially colonized person. It "robs" the racially colonized of "all worth," by which I take Fanon to mean human dignity, and "all individuality," which comprehended at its most elementary level connotes those defining and distinguishing characteristics which makes one person (perhaps in a multiplicity of ways) discernible and different from another. A person's "individuality" is, in a sense, inextricable from their personality, and both of these combined, constitute a person's identity.<sup>9</sup> To "rob" the racially colonized of "all worth" and "all individuality" is to deprive them of their dignity and identity. They become dignified and distinguishable only to the extent that they bring themselves "as quickly as possible into step with the white world." This is, of course, why Fanon never grew weary of exclaiming:

At the risk of arousing the resentment of my colored brothers, I will say that the black is not a man. . . . The black man wants to be white. . . . However painful it may be for me to accept this conclusion, I am obliged to state it: For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is [to be and/or become] white. . . . The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is [to be and/or become] white. (pp. 8–10, 228)

By denying the dignity and identity of the oppressed, the oppressors lamely lump all the oppressed together. They, the oppressed, become one big black blob or mob (depending on the time and circumstance), and

under such conditions the oppressors construct a world, a reality where only one particular part of humanity, the white part, is seen as human (see Gordon 1997a, pp. 69–80; 2000b, pp. 153–163). In fact, the very nature of what it means to be “human” becomes synonymous with the ruling race, or nation, or empire, etcetera. Hence, Fanon’s reiteration: “For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is [to be and/or become] white.” Observe that Fanon begins and ends *Black Skin, White Masks* with this infernal epitaph. It appears in the conclusion precisely as it does in the introduction. He knew, so long as “white men consider themselves superior to black men,” so long as “black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect,” and, so long as racially colonized humanity refused to extricate themselves from their various racial colonial situations, then for so long would the Manichaean situation of the racial colonial world persist (Fanon, 1967, p. 10). Whether “blob” or “mob,” the oppressed, in the world(s) the racial colonialists and racist capitalists have constructed, are denied an identity and, therefore, are perpetually perceived—by the oppressors and all too often each other—as anonymous and, consequently, experience an intense and excruciating anonymity (see Blaut, 1993; Gordon, 1995b, pp. 37–66; 1997b, pp. 13–24; 2000b, pp. 153–163).

Fanon’s concept of human freedom rests, at bottom, on the revolutionary (re)politicization and (re)education of the people, and here “the people” connotes all strata and classes of persons in a given society or social setting. He, similar to W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James, understood that it was possible for the state to be free and the people not to be free. Perhaps few statements capture this contradiction on the printed page better than when Fanon (1968) wrote: “Paradoxically, the national government [headed by the racially colonized bourgeoisie] in its dealing with the country people as a whole is reminiscent of certain features of the former colonial power” (p. 118). Similar to Frederick Douglass, who felt that the United States’ “fourth of July” holiday was, “from the slave’s point of view,” an unequivocal “sham,” Fanon audaciously asserted that the fanfare and bombast symbolizing and celebrating the inauguration of the “national government” represented nothing other than, “a fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets.”

This kind of “independence,” if it may be referred to as “independence” at all, has little or no effect on the lives, and certainly not on improving the lives, of the racially colonized people. Where Nkrumah termed it “neo-colonialism,” Fanon (1968) called it “false decolonization,” but whichever phrase one employs, the results are the same: the continued colonization and racialization or, rather, the ongoing oppression of the oppressed (p. 59). For Fanon, “true decolonization,” that is to say *authentic anti-imperialist freedom*, is possible only when political independence is combined with

personal independence, and revolutionary decolonization is the cauldron through which all must pass if human beings, both racially colonized and racial colonizing persons, are to achieve their "destiny," which, according to Fanon (1967), is to be "free." He declared: "No attempt must be made to encase man, for it is his destiny to be set free" (p. 230).

In order for both the racially colonized and the racial colonizers to be "set free," Fanon thought it was necessary to decolonize the whole of humanity, that is, the racially colonized *and* the racial colonizers. In this sense, then, Fanon, contra the erroneous claims of noted African American literary theorist, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in "Critical Fanonism," can and has been read as a global theorist and world revolutionary thinker (see Onwuanibe, 1983; Said, 1989; Turner and Alan, 1999). It is extremely important to address Gates's "anti-Fanonian" (C. J. Robinson, 1993, p. 87) assertions, because, if they are allowed to pass unchecked, then Fanon and Fanonian discourse, what Gates terms "contemporary colonial discourse theory," is reduced to nothing other than a series of diatribes and "dream[s] of decolonization" (Gates, 1999, p. 266; see also Fuss, 1994; Verges, 1999a). Further, Gates's comments on, and criticisms of, Fanon as a global theorist procures for itself a place—albeit a peculiar place—within Africana critical theoretical discourse for several reasons: first, Africana critical theory, by dint of harsh historical circumstances and hard intellectual labor conditions for its constituents, is, in many respects, a "trans-African" theory of global transformation. Second, and in agreement with Lewis Gordon, I believe without a single reservation that Fanon, his ideas and actions, emphatically illustrate the fact that he cannot and must not be "made" (Gates, 1999, pp. 260) to be, as Gordon (1995b, p. 197) put it, "anyone's signifying monkey." Third, if Gates and the "anti-Fanonists" are allowed to downplay or, worst (with all manner of poststructuralist and postmodernist verbosity and word-wizardry), debunk the global dimensions of Fanon's dialectical thought, and especially with regard to *The Wretched of the Earth*, then an innovative intellectual-activist ancestor of and important contributor to Africana critical theory will have been "snuffed out," as it were, in the name of poststructuralist or postmodernist or post-Marxist or postfeminist (take your pick!) discourses' obsessive-compulsive intellectual gate-keeping and *epistemic apartheid* (Gibson, 1995, 1996b, 1999a, 1999c, 2003; C. J. Robinson, 1993; San Juan, 1999; Sekyi-Otu, 1996).

Gates (1999) quips that Edward Said, in "Representing the Colonized," "delivers Fanon as a global theorist *in vacuo*," that is, in a vacuum (p. 253; see also Said, 1989, 1993). He takes issue with the fact that Fanon seems to have been invoked by a number of theorists (almost all literary theorists or critics), on a number of occasions, as a "transcultural, transhistorical global theorist" (Gates, 1999, p. 266). Fanon, according to Gates, who is closely following Albert Memmi's lead, needs to be "rehistoricized," and when and

where this is done it will reveal, Gates à la Memmi claims, "the limits of liberation" and "the very intelligibility of his [Fanon's] dream of decolonization" (p. 266; see also Memmi, 1973).

A *Dying Colonialism*, perhaps unbeknownst to Gates, who almost exclusively limits his criticisms to the Fanon of *Black Skin, White Masks*, is Fanon's study on the Algerian revolution. It is the work in which he describes in stark detail many of the realities of the revolutionary decolonization process—specifically with regard to the North African and Islamic world. However, *The Wretched of the Earth* represents the work in which Fanon said once and for all, as Jean-Paul Sartre (1968) imaginatively put it in his preface: "Natives of all underdeveloped countries, unite!" (p. 10). Sartre understood then, in 1960, what Gates over a quarter of a century later failed to comprehend, and that is that Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, is, as Sartre said, speaking to "his brothers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (p. 11). These continents, the "colonies proper" according to Du Bois, house between 75 percent to 85 percent of the earth's population, which logically would give Said, and/or any other critical theorist, credence to put forward and engage Fanon as a global theorist.<sup>10</sup>

Gates quite simply may have chosen the wrong historical and cultural figure or, at the least, the wrong book by the aforementioned figure, to criticize. For, even though he does pull a few sentences here and there from *The Wretched of the Earth*, he surely must have overlooked or not thoroughly read the climactic conclusion of the book where Fanon (1968) stated, with literally leukemic *dying* conviction:

Come, then, comrades; it would be as well to decide at once to change our ways. We must shake off the heavy darkness in which we were plunged, and leave it behind. The new day which is already at hand must find us firm, prudent, and resolute. . . . Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of *the globe*. For centuries they have stifled almost *the whole of humanity* in the name of so-called spiritual experience. Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration. (p. 311, emphasis added)

It is clearly Fanon's intention here, in the last few heartfelt lines of his literary life, to speak to "the globe" and to "the whole of humanity." Further, as Fanon speaks, he would ask those who would really and truly hear him, those who would join him, to "turn over a new leaf," to be "firm, prudent, and resolute" (p. 316). This is precisely where and why Gates is wrong, and Sartre is right; and here let us be, as Fanon admonished, "firm, prudent, and resolute" with Gates. Because Gates relegates his comments and criticism of Fanon as "a global theorist *in vacuo*" to Fanon's "first and most overtly psychoanalytic book," *Black Skin, White Masks*, he unwittingly

opens himself up to a quandary that several theorists and critics of Fanon or, rather, *faux Fanonists* are caught in: that is, the seemingly irresolvable tension that exists between the “young” and the “mature” Fanon. Gates (1999) knows full well that Fanon wrote in a manner that was, as he himself charged, “highly porous” (p. 252). In fact, quiet as it is kept and to partially return to the criticism I advanced in “Marxist Fanonism,” it is exactly the “highly porous” character of Fanon’s corpus that has enabled Gates (amongst a great gang of literary theorists and critics) to label Fanon “oppositional and postmodern” (Gates), “a global theorist” (Edward Said), “a premature poststructuralist” (Homi Bhabha), and so on and so forth. It will be recollected that Gates wrote:

Fanon’s current fascination for us [literary theorists and cultural critics we may presume] has something to do with the convergence of the problematic of colonialism with that of subject-formation. As a psychoanalyst of culture, as a champion of the wretched of the earth, he is an almost irresistible figure for a criticism that sees itself as both oppositional and postmodern. And yet there’s something Rashomon-like about his contemporary guises. It may be a matter of judgment whether his writings are rife with contradiction or richly dialectical, polyvocal, and multivalent; they are in any event highly porous, that is, wide open to interpretation, and the readings they elicit are, as a result, of unfailing symptomatic interest: Frantz Fanon, not to put too fine a point on it, is a Rorschach blot with legs. (p. 252)

Fanon, understandably for Gates, is an “almost irresistible figure,” but to whom besides Gates himself? Gates answers: those critics who see themselves as both “oppositional and postmodern.” Moving beyond the immediate read—that of Gates as both “oppositional and postmodern,” that is, considering the fact that he did choose freely to write of and on Fanon—I should here like to briefly engage Gates’s “*in vacuo*” claim with regard to Fanon as a global theorist. Fanon may be read as a global theorist not merely because he, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, according to Sartre, was speaking to “his brothers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,” but, because his actions and ideas have had a “global” impact, not simply on college campuses, but also in concrete cultural communities, radical political struggles, and revolutionary social movements (Bulhan, 1985, p. 6; Gordon, 1995b, pp. 94–95). It could be observed initially that the very critics that Gates criticizes were born and bred in various places that span the globe. For example, Edward Said, as is well known, was Palestinian; Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are both Indian; Albert Memmi is Tunisian; Abdul JanMohamed is Kenyan; and Benita Parry, as we are told in the text, is a “radical South African expatriate” (Gates, 1999, p. 259). Perhaps, even on a cursory level, this goes far to illustrate Fanon’s “global” irresistibility and applicability, and the very fact that each of the theorists that engaged



Fanon produced (and provides us with), as Gates openly admits, "a usable Fanon" (p. 254). A Fanon that, according to Gates, is "highly porous," yet should be, we are told, "rehistoricized," following the theory of contemporary critical literary discourse, and condemned to the passé "colonial paradigm" (p. 266).

For, "[i]f Said made of Fanon an advocative of post-postmodern counternarratives of liberation; if JanMohamed made of Fanon a Manichean theorist of colonialism as absolute negation; and if Bhabha cloned, from Fanon's theoría, another Third World poststructuralist, [and] Parry's Fanon (which I generally find persuasive) turns out to confirm her own rather optimistic vision of literature and social action," then what, we are given liberty to query, has Gates "made" of Fanon (p. 260)? Fanon, for Gates, is "a psychoanalyst of culture," "a champion of the wretched of the earth," who by no means should be elevated "above his localities of discourse as a transcultural, transhistorical global theorist" (pp. 252, 266). However, here Gates misses Fanon's (and, perhaps, many truly *critical* Fanonists', as opposed to *hermeneutic* Fanonists) point(s). In order to be, as Gates asserts, "a champion of the wretched of the earth," Fanon (1969) knew full well that he had no other recourse but to—as demonstrated in his extended essay "Racism and Culture" (in *Toward the African Revolution*)—resign himself, and risk his life "to fight all forms of exploitation and . . . alienation of man" (p. 43). Perhaps in the end it is Gates who has flung himself into a vacuum by confining himself, as he reports, to Fanon's "first and most overtly psychoanalytic book," *Black Skin, White Masks*. In other words, Gates, not to put too fine a point on it, seems to want to overemphasize the political *particulars* without acknowledging the critical theoretical *universals* of Fanon's work and, rather oddly for such a celebrated literary theorist and cultural critic, by limiting himself to Fanon's first book Gates *theoretically freeze-frames* and grossly misinterprets Fanon and the ways in which, as Edward Said (1999, 2000) said, theory, especially critical theory, travels—by which Said essentially meant, concepts can be and often are carried from their original context to other contexts; ideas can and often do move from their initial milieu to different milieux, all the while losing some of their original meaning and particular potency, but also gaining new, universal meaning and epistemic efficacy.

Fanon provides the workers in Africana critical theory a path down which to plod. In focusing on the international aspects of Fanon's thought, it should be observed that this is precisely what makes him such an enduring figure in Africana critical theoretical and philosophical discourse. As Lou Turner and John Alan (1999), in "Frantz Fanon, World Revolutionary," have pointed out, Fanon acutely understood that the harsh realities of the racial colonial world were not necessarily endemic and/or inextricable to the continental African experience (p. 11; see also Turner and Alan, 1986).

On the contrary, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon consistently spoke of "the colonizer" and "the colonized," "the native" and "the national bourgeoisie," "the national struggle," "national consciousness," "national culture," "the national government," and so on and so forth. That is to say that he did not specifically speak of the Algerian or North African situation, as he had done in *A Dying Colonialism*. In fact, Hussein Adam (1999) has stated that "certain ambiguities and contradictions" in Fanon text(s) may exist because "he wanted to avoid offering a rigid blueprint" of what "revolution," "decolonization," "freedom," "democracy," "socialism," etcetera, might be like (pp. 135–136; see also Adam, 1974). It was indeed Fanon (1968) who said that decolonization, being "a historical process," "cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content" (p. 36). Fanon knew then, as we should know now, that the agonies of Africa and its people cannot and will never follow the whims nor wishes of theoreticians, no matter how "critical" or "revolutionary" they think they are or, with hallowed and high-sounding words, claim to be.

Contributing the concepts of revolutionary decolonization and revolutionary humanism to the discourse of Africana critical theory, Fanon provides us with the possibility and potential of being really and truly "set free." As with others in the Africana tradition of critical theory, Fanon (1967) believed, without reservation, that "what is most human in man [and woman]"—that is, in all human beings—is the incessant quest for "freedom" (p. 222). Fanon began *Black Skin, White Masks* with a series of brief, but sincere and serious, incantations:

Toward a new humanism . . .  
 Understanding among men . . .  
 Our colored brothers . . .  
 Mankind, I believe in you . . .  
 Race Prejudice . . .  
 To understand and to love . . . (p. 7)

It is here, among these initial inchoate remarks from his first book, that we find Fanon, as he was and as he would remain until the dark day of his untimely death: a philosopher of human freedom and a remarkable revolutionary humanist. And, it should be recalled, he told us from the beginning: "I do not come with timeless truths" (p. 7). Because he knew, perhaps all too well, that freedom cannot be achieved or measured by what has taken place in the past. Indeed, it was Fanon himself who said: "In no fashion should I undertake to prepare the world that will come later. I belong irreducibly to my time" (p. 13; see also Verges, 1999a). The freedom which we seek today is not the "freedom" that Africana critical theory's intellectual-activist

ancestors fought for yesterday. Absolutely not. For instance, Fanon's critical theory certainly falls short when and where we come to the question(s) of sexual orientation and its implications for contemporary radical politics and revolutionary social movements (Goldie, 1999; Mercer, 1996, 1999). However, the work of Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Barbara Smith, Essex Hemphill, Kobena Mercer, Dwight McBride, and Phillip Brian Harper each answers this question or, rather, these questions in their own unique way (E. P. Johnson and Henderson, 2005). Something similar could be said about the Negritude theorists, Pan-Africanists, Marxists, surrealists, existentialists, and phenomenologists that Fanon drew from. Their thought, for the most part, indubitably remained silent on issues of sexual orientation and gender (Sharpley-Whiting, 2002). And finally, as we witnessed in the preceding form of Fanonism, "Feminist Fanonism," even the great "revolutionary humanist" Frantz Fanon is found wanting when it comes to "true" women's decolonization and "true" women's liberation (Goldie, 1999; Mercer, 1999; Sharpley-Whiting, 1997). But, we must not allow deficiencies in our intellectual-activist ancestors' thought and texts to mar the contributions they can and, in many senses, must make to the deepening and (re)development of the Africana tradition of critical theory if we are to, as the lionized African American critical theorist Lucius Outlaw (1996) admonished, come together "for sustained, systematic, critical reconstructions of intellectual histories that might serve as resources for our work" (p. 83).

Fanon correctly and perceptively pointed out that his words are not "timeless truths." Conversely, and in all intellectual honesty, they belong "irreducibly" to his time, and as such they are words that are at once wedded to and weighted with circumstances and situations of a bygone world, a world that was. However, and we must be scrupulous here, Fanon's words do, and rightly so, carry a certain amount of weight in the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world of the twenty-first century. Why? Because, as Emmanuel Hansen (1977) wrote, "Fanon was not exclusively a man of study: he was a man of action. He tried to live and act in such a way as to bring the ideas in which he believed into being. In this way his life and personality were inextricably linked with ideas" (p. 12).

As I understand it, Africana studies would do well, at all costs, to emulate Fanon in this respect. Because, it is in this way that the workers in Africana studies can truly fulfill their mission as simultaneous intellectuals *and* activists. We must concede with the Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame Gyekye (1997), where he asserted, "philosophical thought is never worked out in a cultural or historical vacuum" (p. vii). Quite the contrary, the problems that a philosopher or critical theorist addresses are always and ever colored by, and contextually situated within, specific historical, social, political, cultural, and geographical settings. These "settings" are always subjective, and it is for this reason that Gyekye contends: "Philosophers belonging to a

given culture or era or tradition select those concepts or clusters of concepts that for one reason or another, matter most and that therefore are brought to the fore in their analysis" (p. 7).

For the intellectual-activists of contemporary Africana studies, revolutionary decolonization—"the complete calling in question of the [racial] colonial situation"—should, or ought to be, one of the "concepts or clusters of concepts" "brought to the fore of their analysis." As Fanon (1968) eloquently explained, "independence" is neither attained with "the blare of trumpets" and a "flag waving," nor is "independence" maintained by appeals to "superstitions" and "fanaticisms," but through a people's constant and concrete efforts to (re)create themselves, and (re)construct their own distinct critical consciousness and culture (pp. 147, 211, 233).

Fanon's concept of revolutionary decolonization acknowledges something similar to Césaire's revolutionary Negritude, Cabral's critical "return to the source," and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonizing the Mind*, and that is the fact that "true" decolonization is not merely an antiracist and anticolonialist war waged for land, but an anti-imperialist war waged for the racially colonized person's way of life, their life-worlds and lived-experiences and, even more, their long-denied and deeply denigrated humanity (Osei-Nyame, 1998, 1999). Césaire (1972), it will be recollected, said "it is necessary to decolonize our minds, our inner life, at the same time that we decolonize society" (p. 78). Ngũgĩ (1986) contends that racial colonialism is nothing other than a "cultural bomb" which, as he and the Gikuyu of Kenya know all too well, "annihilates a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (p. 3; see also Cantalupo, 1995a, 1995b; Cook, 1997; Gikandi, 2000; Killam, 1980, 1984; Lindfors and Kothandaraman, 2001; Lovesey, 2000; Nazareth, 2000; Ngũgĩ, 2006; Pandurang, 2007; Robson, 1979; Sicherman, 1990; P. Williams, 1999). What these three theorists' concepts of decolonization have in common is an unfaltering belief in the necessity of authentic or "true" decolonization, that is, an uncompromising aspiration to radically "change the world," to replace "a certain 'species'" of imperialist human beings with "another 'species'" of revolutionary and/or anti-imperialist human beings (Ngũgĩ, 1986, p. 3; Fanon, 1968, p. 35). As Ngũgĩ's mid-1980s update of the concept of "true" decolonization demonstrates, the need for "a complete calling in question of the [racial] colonial situation" remains one of the most persistent and pressing issues of and for our (neo)colonial condition and (post)modern moment.

It is here, in the twilight of our (neo)colonial condition and (post)modern moment, that we must come to terms with our time(s) and circumstances, ourselves and situations. For Fanon (1967), "[i]n no fashion," should be forced to speak for "the world that will come later" (p. 13). We, that is, those

of us who have lived or, rather, survived to see the dawn and first decade of the twenty-first century, have a responsibility to critically (re)interpret, radically reflect on, and acutely articulate a way out of the quagmire humanity appears to be arrested in. As we have seen, Fanon understood there to be “true” and “false” forms of decolonization, and Nkrumah knew as far back as 1965 that “neo-colonialism” presents and represents “imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage.” What we, the workers in Africana critical theory, among others, need to keep in mind is that “[o]ld-fashioned colonialism is by no means entirely abolished” (Nkrumah, 1965, p. ix). On the contrary, contemporary colonialism (i.e., “neocolonialism,” as opposed to “postcolonialism”) is just as much a threat to “developed” white supremacist patriarchal capitalist societies as it has been and remains for “underdeveloped” white supremacist patriarchal colonialist societies.

**“WE MUST SHAKE OFF THIS HEAVY DARKNESS IN WHICH WE WERE PLUNGED, AND LEAVE IT BEHIND”: ON FANON’S UNFINISHED REVOLUTIONARY DECOLONIZATION AND ITS CONTINUED RELEVANCE FOR CONTEMPORARY AFRICANA STUDIES, RADICAL POLITICS, AND CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY**

In the conclusion of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1968) famously (and *infamously*, according to his critics) wrote: “Come, then, comrades; it would be as well to decide at once to change our ways. We must shake off the heavy darkness in which we were plunged, and leave it behind. The new day which is already at hand must find us firm, prudent, and resolute” (p. 311). In all my efforts to find weighted words to conclude these (actually unconcludable) series of studies, it is these which have been and remain recurring. Like Fanon I, therefore, close issuing an earnest caveat: The Africana tradition of critical theory has several serious challenges before it; challenges which if not adequately addressed could potentially signal setbacks in its continued conceptual generation and much-needed discursive development or, worst, setbacks that could ultimately symbolize Africana critical theory’s intellectual epitaph.

As an ongoing social praxis-promoting theory and intellectual archaeology project, African critical theory stands very little chance of realization if one of the major problematics of Africana studies is not critically and consciously overcome—and that is, its seeming hostility toward or, at the least, reluctance to produce or critically dialogue with new theory and new praxis. All too often in Africana studies and, ironically, even in Africana philosophy, theory is opposed to praxis, to radical politics, to the life-worlds, lived-experiences and life-struggles of continental and diasporan Africans, as though it is something intrinsically outside of Africana revolutionary

praxis, and, even more, as though critical thought is somehow absent when and where black revolutionaries and black radical praxis is present. A similar observation could be made of the obverse: All too often black radical praxis is exalted as an end in itself and, very rarely, is it critically and reflexively examined for its contribution to black radical politics and Africana critical theory. It is astonishing that Africana studies, which prides itself on its intellectual-activist inception and growth out of radical grassroots movements (e.g., the Black Power, Black Arts, Black Women's Liberation, Black Liberation Theology, Black Anti-War, among other, movements), seems to regularly reject or lamely label "Eurocentric" new theories produced by Africana studies scholars who critically dialogue with a wide range of antiracist, antisexist, anticapitalist, anticolonialist, and sexual orientation-sensitive theory produced by non-Africana studies scholars, be it critical race theory, feminist theory, Marxist theory, postmodern theory, postcolonial theory or queer theory, among others. Narrow-minded notions such as these not only display the *epistemic exclusiveness* and *intellectual insularity* that Africana critical theory on principle challenges and wants nothing whatsoever to do with, but it also demonstrates that this one-dimensional conception of Africana studies is not in any way revolutionary and is instead actually quite retrogressive, since it seeks to deform and collapse the traditionally *transdisciplinary human science* of Africana studies into a monstrously mangled monodisciplinary discipline which studies continental and diasporan Africans from some supposed pristine and perfect "African" or "black" racial, ethnocultural and, this should be intensely emphasized, *essentialist* perspective—here, I need not say that Senghor's ghost seems to continue to conceptually haunt Africana studies, and specifically ruminations on black radical politics and the Africana tradition of critical theory.

In summary, then, it must be openly admitted that the theoretic tensions noted in the previous paragraphs point to, and produce an extremely uneasy combination of criticisms and interpretations that defy simple synopsis or conventional conceptual rules. Consequently, most of Fanon's critics have heretofore downplayed and diminished the real brilliance and brawn of his work by failing to grasp its antinomies, and they have, therefore, put forward a divided and distorted Fanon, who is *either*, for example, a Pan-Africanist *or* existentialist, a black nationalist *or* revolutionary humanist, a "prophet of violence" *or* Islamic propagandist, a radical psychiatrist *or* male-feminist, a neo-Negritude theorist *or* dogmatic Marxist. Each of the aforementioned superficial ascriptions falls short, shamefully short, of capturing the complex and chameleonic character of Fanon's critical theory and the difficulties involved in interpreting it employing the one-sided, single-subject theoretical, and monodisciplinary devices that his research, writings, and radicalism consistently transgressed, transcended, and

transversed—hence, my recurrent characterization of Fanon as a *transdisciplinary human scientist and critical social theorist*.

Many dismiss Fanon and charge his work with being dense because it employs a wide range of theory from several different disciplines. While others, such as myself, are attracted to his work because it is theoretically thick, rich in both radicality and originality, and boldly crosses so many academic and political boundaries. No matter what one's ultimate attitude toward Fanon, I honestly believe that the fact that his thought and texts continue to cause contemporary controversies, and that they have been discussed and debated *across the disciplines* for more than half a century, in some degree points to the multidimensionality and transdisciplinarity of his ideas, which offer enigmatic insights for everyone either to embrace enthusiastically or demur definitively. Hence, the dialectic of attraction and repulsion in Fanon studies can partly be attributed to the ambiguities inherent in his thought and the monodisciplinary anxieties of many of the interpreters of his work. Suffice to say this is the case, then—several previous studies of his thought are seriously flawed because they have sought to grasp and grapple with Fanon's oeuvre using monodisciplinary instead of multidisciplinary methods and models.

Whatever the deficiencies of his thought and the problems with his approach(es) to critical issues confronting Africana and other oppressed people, Fanon forces his readers to think deeply, to criticize thoroughly, and to move beyond the imperialist impulses of the established order, which is to say, of the white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist world. Many critics have made solid criticisms of various aspects of Fanon's thought but, when analyzed objectively, his life-work and insurgent intellectual legacy is impressive and awe-inspiring, as is his loyalty to the most radical and revolutionary thought and practice traditions in Africana and world history. His impact and influence has been widespread, not only cutting across academic disciplines, but setting aglow several revolutionary social movements and radical political programs.

Where some theorists dogmatically hold views simply because they are fashionable or politically popular, Fanon's work draws from a diverse array of often eclectic and enigmatic sources and, therefore, offers no closed system or absolute truths. Throughout *Forms of Fanonism*, I have demonstrated time and time again that his thought was constantly epistemically open and routinely responsive to changing historical and cultural conditions, especially within the Caribbean and Africa. There are several, sometimes stunning transformations in his theory that are in most instances attempts to answer conundrums created by changing sociopolitical, historical, and cultural conditions. In conclusion, then, I want to suggest that it is the epistemic openness and consistently nondogmatic radicalism and revolutionary humanism of Fanon's project, the richness and wide range and reach of

his ideas, and the absence of any finished system or closed body of clearly defined truths that can be accepted or rejected at ease, which constitute both the contemporary philosophical fascination with, and continuing critical importance of Frantz Fanon and his discourse on revolutionary decolonization.

## NOTES

1. My interpretation of the various forms of humanism have been informed and influenced by: J. Carroll (1993), Champigny (1972), Fitzmaurice (2003), Flew (1993), Goodman (2003), Herrick (2003), P. Johnson (1994), Kraye and Stone (2000), Law (2007), Levinas (2003), Macebuh (2002), Mafizul and Patwari (1992), Makdisi (1990), Noonan (2003), Norman (2004), Onwuanibe (1983), Osei-Nyame (2002), Otten (2004), Pinn (1997, 2001, 2004), M. N. Roy (1952), Rychlak (1987), Said (2004b), Seidman and Murphy (2004), C. Smith (2005), J. E. Smith (1994), and Todorov (2002). In addition, it would not be going too far afield to openly acknowledge that my critical theory of revolutionary humanism articulated here has been indelibly influenced by and harbors several conceptual connections to Raya Dunayevskaya's intellectual history-making critical theory *and* principled praxis of "Marxist humanism" (see Dunayevskaya, 1958, 1959, 1963, 1967, 1973, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1979a, 1979b, 1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1982, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1996, 2002; Dunayevskaya, Walker, and Savio, 1965). My critique of Eurocentric humanism has especially benefited from Dunayevskaya's incessant emphasis on the unity of theory and praxis, and the inextricability of praxis and theory (i.e., the ways in which practice promises and helps to produce new theory). However, none of the aforementioned precludes my critique of the sometimes subtle, and sometimes not so subtle Eurocentrism of her conception of Marxist humanism, or her seeming reluctance to grapple in any discursive depth with the fact that Karl Marx and most white Marxists have shamefully shunned critiques of and/or radical/revolutionary movements against racism and, more specifically, white supremacy to the (or, rather, *their*) discursive margins. Dunayevskaya was willing to concede Marxism's adequacies with regard to sexism and patriarchy, but she never really developed a thoroughgoing self-reflexive critique of Marxism's inattention to *the political economy of race and racism* in white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist societies. Indeed, she *did* critically engage race and racism in her work, but she *did not* critically engage race and racism, or critically dialogue with the major antiracist and critical race theorists (C. L. R. James withstanding), to the critical detail and discursive depth with which she did critical class (mostly white male Marxists) and critical gender (mostly white feminists) theorists. As I have argued with regard to several, if not *most*, of the European theorists and thought-traditions that African critical theory discursively dialogues with: *the dialectic must always and everywhere be brought to bear when and where we appropriate theories or praxes produced by theorists and/or liberation struggles arising outside of the specificities and special needs of the wretched of the earth of the twenty-first century, who continue to be economically exploited, dreadfully gendered, sexually violated, and racially oppressed*. Below this adage will be witnessed



when I appropriate Herbert Marcuse and Jean-Paul Sartre's distinct critiques of humanism as articulated by bourgeois racial capitalist and racial colonial capitalist societies respectively.

2. It is, however, important to observe that Marcuse was, and continues to be, condemned by both conservatives and dogmatic Marxists for his "pessimism" and "utopianism" (Abromeit and Cobb, 2005; Bleich, 1977; P. Breines, 1970; Farr, 2008; B. Katz, 1982; Kellner, 1984; Kolakowski, 1978c; Lipshires, 1974; MacIntyre, 1970; Pippin and Feenberg, 1988; Reitz, 2000; Schoolman, 1980; Wolff and Moore, 1967). Similar to the critiques leveled against Fanon's views on revolutionary violence, which are usually nothing other than faux Fanonists' grotesque caricatures of his thought, the critiques of Marcuse's "pessimism" and "utopianism" are, ironically, indicative of the very one-dimensional thought his work aimed to expose and eradicate. What is more, one-sided or one-dimensional interpretations of many-sided or, rather, multidimensional dialectical theorists, such as Fanon and Marcuse, fail to critically engage and openly acknowledge the fact that it has long been the conjectural and "utopian" aspects of their work that have incessantly attracted intellectual-activists across a wide range of disciplines, as well as community caretakers, cultural workers, and grassroots organizers outside of the borders and boundaries of the *epistemic apartheid* of the European and European American academies. To put it plainly, authentic critical theory defies single subject-focused, monodisciplinary disciplining and adroitly and interdisciplinarily escapes or, at the least, collapses "conventional" (i.e., white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalist) categorizations and conceptualizations. More than any other major Frankfurt School critical theorist—Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, and Jürgen Habermas—my conception of critical theory has been indelibly influenced by Herbert Marcuse, whose critical theory increasingly incorporated and openly exhibited the influence of Africana liberation theory (Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, and the Black Panthers), Latin American liberation theory (Che Guevara and Fidel Castro), and women's liberation theory (Rosa Luxemburg, Raya Dunayevskaya, Hannah Arendt, and Angela Davis), among others (see Marcuse, 1969a, pp. 7, 46–47, 79–91; 1970a, pp. 82–108; 1972a). Though Marcuse never dialogued with Africana, Latin American, and women's liberation theory with the discursive depth and critical detail which he did European and European American (male) theory, and considering the fact that his approach to the life-worlds and lived-experiences of non-Europeans/nonwhites was thoroughly shot through with the accoutrements of Eurocentrism—Marcuse (1972a, pp. 9, 29) employed labels and language such as "backward countries" and "barbarian civilization[s]" very frequently when referring to non-European/nonwhite cultures and civilizations—there may, yet and still, be much in his dialectical social thought that could be of use to Africana and other non-European/nonwhite critical theorists (see Marcuse, 1964, 1965c, 1969a, 1970a, 1970b, 1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1978a, 1997a, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007b). In fact, and in all intellectual honesty, my own deep respect for and enthusiastic interest in Marcuse and Marcusean critical theory has been indelibly informed and influenced by the critically acclaimed African American feminist philosopher and radical political activist Angela Davis (2005b), who was one of his students in the late 1960s and who recently remarked at a conference held in honor of the centennial of his birth: "It seems to me that the overarching themes of Marcuse's thought are as relevant

today on the cusp of the twenty-first century as they were when his scholarship and political interventions were most widely celebrated. . . . I am not suggesting that Marcuse should be revived as the preeminent theorist of the twenty-first century. He, more than anyone, insisted on the deeply historical character of theory. It would certainly militate against the spirit of his ideas to argue that his work contains the solution to the many dilemmas facing us as scholars, organizers, advocates, artists, and, I would add, as marginalized communities, whose members are increasingly treated as detritus and relegated to prisons, which, in turn, generate astronomical profits for a growing global prison industry. An uncritical and nostalgic version of Marcuse, which, for example, fails to acknowledge the limits of an aesthetic theory that maintains a rigid distinction between high and low art, one that is not willing to engage seriously with popular culture and all its contradictions, would not be helpful to those who are seeking to forge radical political vocabularies today. But, if we abandon our Marcuse nostalgia and attempt to incorporate his ideas into a historical memory that draws upon the useful aspects of the past in order to put them to work in the present, we will be able to hold on to Marcuse's legacies as we explore terrains that he himself could never have imagined" (pp. xi, xiii–xiv). Throughout this study it has been my intention to not only expose critical theorists to the five major forms of Fanonism and the unique ways in which these five forms contribute to the deconstruction and reconstruction of contemporary Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory, but also to encourage old and new Fanonists to "abandon" their Fanon "nostalgia and attempt to incorporate his ideas into a historical [and herstorical] memory that draws upon the useful aspects of the past in order to put them to work in the present." It is in this way, and perhaps *only* in this way, that we will be able to not only "hold on to," critically grasp, and seriously grapple with Fanon's lifework, insurgent intellectual and radical political "legacies," but also "explore terrains that he himself could never have imagined." An additional intention of this study has been to deepen and develop the discourse between or, in certain instances, *create* avenues of critical dialogue where Africana and other non-European traditions of critical theory can finally critically converse with European and European American traditions of critical theory on equal terms and level terrains while consciously addressing the diabolical dialectics of white superiority and nonwhite inferiority, as well as "true" decolonization and "true" liberation.

3. My analysis here has greatly benefited from an Africana critical theoretical approach to and keen contraction of Michel Foucault's work on the interconnections and intersections of power, knowledge, domination, and discourse. Following Foucault, then, Africana critical theory does not emphasize racism, sexism, colonialism, and capitalism as free-floating and/or disconnected forces and forms of violence, exploitation, and oppression, but as incessantly overlapping and inextricably interconnected systems or intensely institutionally embedded forces and forms of violence, exploitation, and oppression. Here I have generously drawn from a wide range of Foucault's (1997) work, but it was the following excerpt from "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" that exerted the greatest impact on my analysis in this instance: "[W]e must introduce the concept of domination. The analyses I am trying to make bear essentially on relations of power. By this I mean something different from states of domination. Power relations are extremely widespread in human relationships. Now, this means not that political power is ev-

erywhere, but that there is in human relationships a whole range of power relations that may come into play among individuals, within families, in pedagogical relationships, political life, and so on. The analysis of power relations is an extremely complex area; one sometimes encounters what may be called situations or states of domination in which the power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen. When an individual or social group succeeds in blocking a field of power relations, immobilizing them and preventing any reversibility of movement by economic, political, or military means, one is faced with what may be called a state of domination. In such a state, it is certain that practices of freedom do not exist or exist only unilaterally or are extremely constrained and limited. Thus . . . liberation is sometimes the political or historical condition for a practice of freedom. . . . Liberation paves the way for new power relationships, which must be controlled by practices of freedom" (pp. 283–284; see also Foucault, 1973, 1974, 1977a, 1977b, 1979, 1984, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1994, 1998, 2000; Gutting, 2005; Hoy, 1991). Throughout this study I have sought to "slightly stretch"—as Fanon (1968, p. 40) put it with regard to Marxism—Foucault's critical theories of power, knowledge, domination, and discourse in light of racism, sexism, colonialism, and capitalism. Which is to say, in other words, that I have endeavored to apply Foucault's seemingly abstract ruminations on power, knowledge, domination, and discourse, and radically realize or, rather, concretize them in the forces and forms of modern/postmodern and neocolonial/postcolonial racism, sexism, colonialism, and capitalism. Therefore, building on and striving to go beyond Fanon's discourse on racial colonialism and revolutionary decolonization, I have attempted to innovatively argue that it is important for Fanonists to epistemically open themselves to contemporary Africana studies, radical politics, and critical social theory and emphasize the overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting nature of racism, sexism, colonialism, and capitalism as forces and forms of power, knowledge, domination, and discourse. This line of logic eventually led me to deconstruct and reconstruct the discourse(s) and counterdiscourse(s) on racism, sexism, colonialism, and capitalism and advance Africana critical theory's concept of *white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism* as a more accurate ideological and political portrait of the overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting systems and intensely institutionally embedded forces and forms of violence, exploitation, and oppression that the wretched of the earth have long been in a life-and-death battle against.

4. Santoni's work stands out amongst that of his peers—that is, among other Sartre scholars—in that he seems to consciously challenge the traditional interpretation of the "Fanon-Sartre axis," as Annie Cohen-Solal (1987) put it, by openly acknowledging that Fanon's critical theory was not simply derivative of Sartre's existential-phenomenological Marxism, but that Sartre was deeply, if not equally influenced by Fanon's critical conception of racial colonialism and distinct discourse on revolutionary decolonization as well (p. 431). For instance, compare Santoni's assertion that "Fanon, however, was not an uncritical disciple of Sartre. . . . [I]t is evident that Fanon's thinking also had some impact on Sartre's: this was not a one-way intellectual or ideological street" with Cohen-Solal's contention that "later, in his works, Fanon would himself rely on Sartre's analysis of 'Negritude'. . . . Fanon's 'Intellectuals and Democrats Face the Algerian Question' shared its analysis and its

anger with Sartre's 'The Left in Question'" (pp. 432–433). Both Cohen-Solal and Bernard-Henri Levy (2003) readily reproduce an excerpt from Fanon's letter to the publisher of *The Wretched of the Earth*, François Maspero, where he stated: "The state of my health has improved slightly. I have decided to write something after all [i.e., *The Wretched of the Earth*]. I must say that I was insistently asked to do so by our own people. . . . Trusting that you'll satisfy my request, I would like to ask you to speed up the publication of the book: we need it in Algeria and Africa. . . . Ask Sartre to write a preface. Tell him that each time I sit down at my desk, I think of him who writes such important things for our future but who as yet has found no readers . . . at all" (Cohen-Solal, 1987, pp. 433; Levy, 2003, p. 21–22). It is, of course, all well, good, and fine that Fanon intellectually admired and was inspired by Sartre. That, to be perfectly honest, is an intellectual historical fact and is not the issue that I am raising. What I wish to highlight here is the fact that both Cohen-Solal and Levy go out of their way to give the impression that Fanon was in such intellectual awe of Sartre that he either did not or could not have possibly influenced Sartre. Both Cohen-Solal and Levy readily report that prior to meeting Sartre, Fanon told Claude Lanzmann and Marcel Peju that "Sartre was a god" (Cohen-Solal, 1987, p. 431) or, rather, that "Sartre was, for him, a living god" (Levy, 2003, p. 21). Now, the irony of Cohen-Solal's and Levy's reports is that they make no mention of the fact(s) that, first, Fanon had a distinct distaste for religion and argued, especially in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that the wretched of the earth are in and of themselves the masters of their own destinies when and where they commit to the process(es) and program(s) of revolutionary decolonization. Fanon's texts tell us that he would strongly resent and reject analyses or, rather, misinterpretations of his thought and texts that make it appear as though he or the wretched of the earth owe the "legitimacy" of or their right to revolutionary decolonization to some "supernatural power," especially a French "supernatural power." Concerning this issue in specific, it will be recalled that the most revealing passage from *The Wretched of the Earth* reads: "Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself" (Fanon, 1968, pp. 36–37). David Macey (2000) makes the point that Fanon had an almost exclusively instrumental relationship with religion, specifically Islam, and that he was more or less irreligious (pp. 235–236, 332–333, 502–504). The second irony of Cohen-Solal's and Levy's reports that Fanon thought of Sartre as a "god" is that their narratives also fly in the face of Sartre's own staunch stance against the diabolical dialectic of white superiority and black inferiority, intellectual or otherwise, which racistly and, therefore, irrationally allows whites to narcissistically and nefariously view themselves as the white "lords of creation" and white "supra-natural being[s]," and nonwhites as "native" nonhuman "things." Sartre, I honestly believe, would take issue with the great gang of Sartre scholars who interpret or, rather, misinterpret his critical exchanges with Fanon as meetings or interactions between *intellectual unequals*, rather than what they really and truly were, critical

dialogues and debates on the most pressing problems confronting humanity as a whole between *intellectual equals* in an effort to deconstruct and reconstruct critical theories and revolutionary praxes for their particular and peculiar times and situations. My analysis here has greatly benefited from Lewis Gordon's *Fanon and the Crisis of the European Man*, where he correctly contended that "[a]lthough it is correct that Sartre can be better understood in terms of Fanon, it will be instructive to see to what extent Fanon makes sense in terms of Sartre (and to some extent, Merleau-Ponty). . . . It is not our intent to continue the long tradition of treating the thoughts of black philosophers as derivatives of white ones" (1995b, p. 14).

5. In *On Violence*, Hannah Arendt (1970, p. 14, n.19) criticizes Fanon's "Concerning Violence" as a "violence for violence's sake" thesis. For a discussion of the flaws in Arendt's criticisms of Fanon, see Jinadu (1986, pp. 92–93, 231) and Bulhan (1985, pp. 145–148).

6. My conception of philosophical anthropology has been informed and influenced by Agassi (1977), Bien (1984), Donceel (1967), Haefner (1989), Landmann (1974), D. J. Levy (1987, 1993), Maxwell (1984), Northrop (1960), Pihlstrom (1998), Rescher (1990), and Wisniewski (2008).

7. In this regard Fanon's thinking, in many ways, prefigures and is in line with several contemporary social and political theorists. See, for example, M. Adams (2000), Clayton and Williams (2004), Goodin and Pettit (1993, 1997), and I. M. Young (1990).

8. Where it is written "that I am a brute beast, that my people and I are like a walking dung-heap that disgustingly fertilizes sweet sugar cane and silky cotton, that I have no use in the world," Fanon is, of course, quoting from Césaire's infamous, if not a bit notorious, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*. See Césaire (1983, pp. 32–85).

9. On human identity, identity theory, and identity politics see Appiah (1994, 1996, 1997); Bhabha (1990); Cornwell (1998); Du Preez (1980); C. Gamble (2007); Kavanaugh (2001); Mohanty, Alcoff, Hames-Garcia, and Moya (2005); Nash (2003); Niezen (2003); and Zack (1998, pp. 67–75).

10. Where Fanon's discourse on revolutionary decolonization is usually relegated to the realm of sociology of race or postcolonial theory—as if he did not make innovative contributions to the critique of sexism and capitalism, especially when and where the wretched of the earth are concerned—in a similar fashion, Du Bois's critical theory of racial colonialism and neocolonialism, as well as his distinct contributions to the critique of patriarchy, are often completely omitted from discussions of his insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy. In *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century* I demonstrated that Du Bois's discourse extended well-beyond the critique of racism and capitalism and, ultimately, came to include critiques of colonialism and sexism. For instance, in "Du Bois and the Politics and Problematics of Postcolonialism" I contended: "Du Bois offers contemporary colonial and postcolonial theorists a critical conception of colonialism in several ways. First, by analyzing colonialism's fundamental features, and, second, by focusing his readers' attention on the world-historic fluctuations and mutations of (neo)colonialism, Du Bois highlights—as Tejumola Olaniyan recently noted—the varied nature of colonialism, not simply in topographical terms, but also in so far as the particularities of the colonized peoples' pre-existing or 'pre-colonial' cultures are

concerned. This is an extremely important point to make because many postcolonial theorists have a tendency to gloss over the specificities and the different degrees to which various peoples were historically and currently continue to be colonized. Finally, by linking colonialism with capitalism, and by refusing to isolate economic exploitation from racial domination and gender discrimination, Du Bois's conception of colonialism prefigures and provides a paradigm for and a critique of contemporary postcolonial discourse. By 'deliberately using the word "colonial" in a much broader sense than is usually given it,' and in asserting that 'there are manifestly groups of people, countries and nations, which while not colonies in the strict sense of the word, yet so approach the colonial system as to merit the designation *semicolonial*,' Du Bois not only anticipates, but contributes the concept of 'semi-colonialism' to postcolonial discourse. It is this concept of 'semi-' or 'quasi-' colonialism that distinguishes Du Bois's conception of colonialism from Césaire, Fanon, Nkrumah, Cabral, and a whole host of classical anti- and de-colonial theorists" (Rabaka, 2007b, pp. 85–86; see also Du Bois, 1945, 1960, 1963, 1965, 1985, 2005; Olaniyan, 2000). The point that I am making here is that, on the one hand, Africana critical theorists, and Du Bois and Fanon scholars in specific, may find much of interest in postcolonial theory. We need mince no words in laying bare the fact that both Africana critical and postcolonial theorists are involved in similar (and, I would aver often identical) projects of radical critique. For Africana critical theorists, to speak generally, great and grave issues emanate from the sociohistorical realities of not simply anti-African racism and racial colonialism, but white supremacist sexism and capitalism as well. For postcolonial theorists, again generally speaking, criticisms have been leveled against each of the aforementioned and, in specific, the ways in which past and present forms of colonialism (as well as, what Sartre called Europe's "racist humanism") insidiously exacerbate and perpetuate racism, sexism, and capitalism. Indeed, a burgeoning philosophical framework that brings diverse discourse on colonialism, anticolonialism, and the coming *postcolonial* world into critical dialogue is on the rise. On the other hand, it should be stated outright, Du Bois, Césaire, Fanon, and Cabral—intellectual-activists or, rather, Africana critical theorists who critiqued white supremacist patriarchal colonial capitalism in unprecedented and innovative ways throughout their intellectual and political lives—have been repeatedly relegated to the periphery of postcolonial discourse. As a result, as I have argued here and elsewhere, postcolonial theorists in many senses undermine and do themselves a disastrous disservice because they ignore and/or erase a wealth of critical concepts and categories, such as "semi-colonialism," "racial colonialism," and "racial colonial capitalism" that could very well aid them in their efforts to critically theorize and bring into being a truly *postcolonial* world (see Rabaka, 2007b, 2008a, 2009).

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# About the Author

**Reiland Rabaka** is an associate professor of Africana studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he is also an affiliate professor in the Department of Women and Gender Studies and a research fellow at the Center for Studies of Ethnicity and Race in America (CSERA). His ongoing research interests include history, philosophy, and methodology of the human sciences; Africana intellectual and cultural history; history of race; politics of race; sociology of race; psychology of race; anthropology of race; philosophy of race; critical race theory; critical white studies; feminist theory; sociology of gender; post-colonial studies; radical politics; critical social theory; critical pedagogy; sociology of education; sociology of religion; and, liberation theology. Included among his regular teaching topics are black abolitionism, the Black Women's Club movement, the New Negro Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, Pan-Africanism, Negritude, black nationalism, black Marxism, the civil rights movement, the Black Power movement, the black women's liberation movement, black liberation theology, Du Bois studies, Fanon studies, critical race theory, critical white studies, hip hop studies, and intersectional critical social theory (race, gender, class, and sexuality studies). His research has been published in *Journal of African American Studies*, *Journal of Black Studies*, *Western Journal of Black Studies*, *Africana Studies Annual Review*, *Africalogical Perspectives*, *Handbook of Black Studies*, *Ethnic Studies Review*, *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, and *Journal of Southern Religion*.

among others. Professor Rabaka is the author of *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century* (2007), *Du Bois's Dialectics: Black Radical Politics and the Reconstruction of Critical Social Theory* (2008), *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition, from W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral* (2009), *Against Epistemic Apartheid: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology* (2010), and *The Weapon of Theory: Amilcar Cabral and the Africana Tradition of Critical Theory* (forthcoming). He is, in addition, the editor of *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Critical Reader* (2010), which is the first volume of critical commentary exclusively devoted to scholarship on Du Bois's pioneering contributions to the discourse and development of sociology. Also, he is the coeditor (along with Arturo Aldama, Elisa Facio, and Daryl Maeda) of *Enduring Legacies: Ethnic Histories and Cultures of Colorado* (forthcoming), which is the first anthology of critical commentary exclusively devoted to the discourse and development of race, gender, and class studies in Colorado and the wider American West. His research has been recognized with several awards, including the W. E. B. Du Bois–Anna Julia Cooper Award and the Cheikh Anta Diop Award. He has collected data, conducted archival research, and lectured extensively both nationally and internationally, and has been the recipient of numerous community service citations, teaching awards, and research fellowships.